Friday, February 20, 2026 No 51 ₹7

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DH

DECCAN HERALD

The Power of Good

Trump gives Iran 10-day ultimatum to seal N-deal

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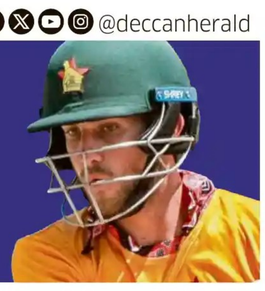
In-form Zimbabwe enter Super 8s, beat Sri Lanka by 6 wickets P.13



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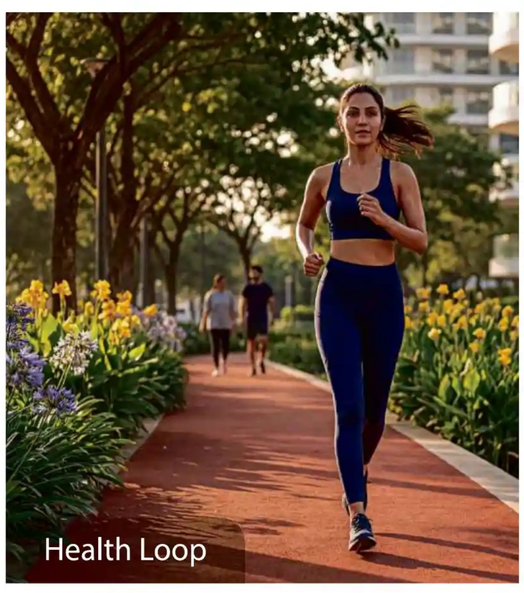
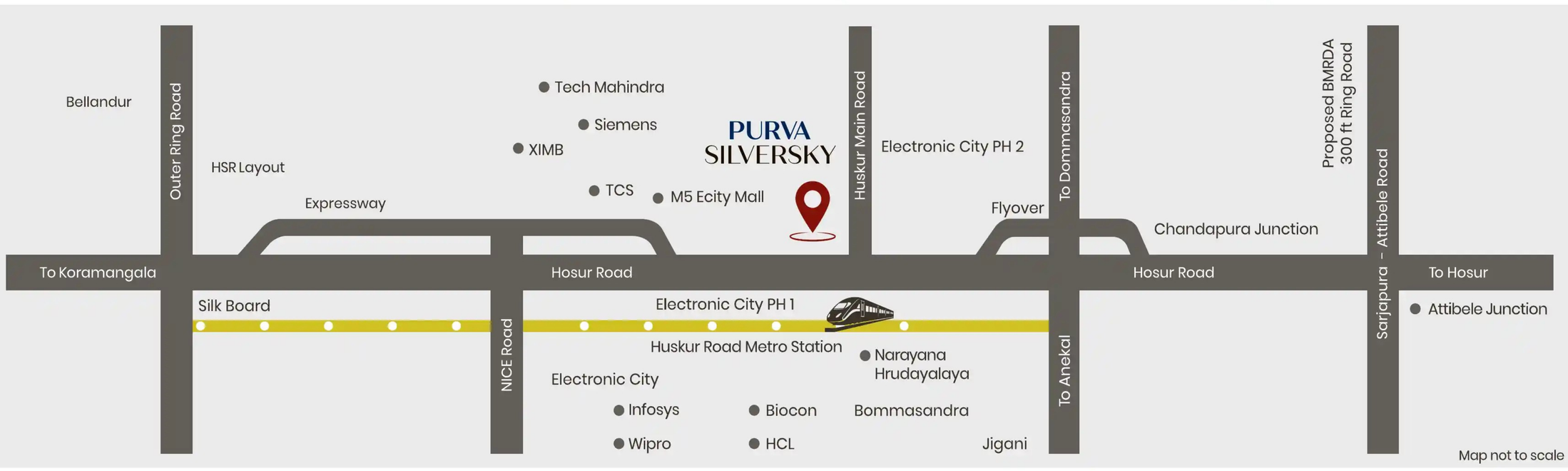

Health Loop



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The Power of Good

UK police arrest former prince over Epstein ties

King Charles III's brother Andrew faces misconduct probe

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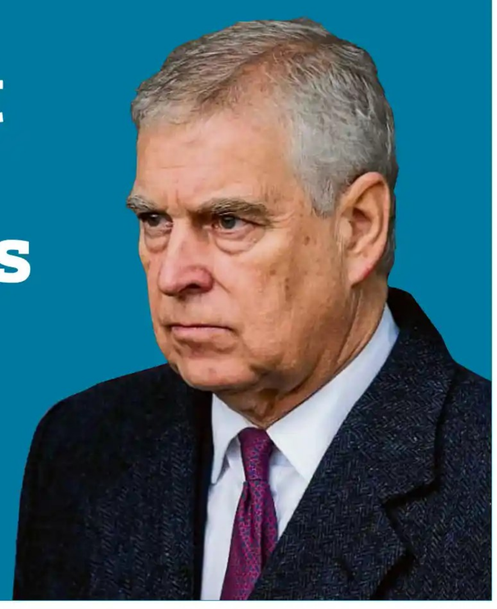


Quickly

SIR in 22 states, UTs to begin in April

The contentious Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in remaining 22 states and Union Territories, including Karnataka, is expected to start from April, the Election Commission told Chief Electoral Officers on Thursday.

Details on Page 9

Trump's Gaza board gets $7bn pledge

US President Donald Trump announced at the inaugural Board of Peace meeting that nine members of the body have agreed to pledge $7 billion toward a Gaza package and that five countries have committed troops for the stabilisation force.

Details on Page 10

Sensex tumbles 1,236 points

Benchmark Sensex tumbled 1,236 points or 1.5%, while Nifty closed near 25,450 on Thursday, amid escalating geopolitical tensions between the US and Iran. The 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 1,236.11 points.

Details on Page 11

Modi pitches for open-source AI

Slams moves to make tech strategic asset

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

DEMOCRATISING TECH
PM says when codes are open, millions of young minds can make them safer and better
Modi underlines need to develop AI as a global common good
Prime minister outlines India's 'MANAV' vision for AI
Urges that technology be made human-centric

PM Narendra Modi at AI Impact Summit in New Delhi. REUTERS

Artificial intelligence (AI) will benefit the world only when it is shared, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday, making a strong pitch for open-source AI development.

"When codes are open and shared, millions of young minds can make them safer and better," Modi said in his address at the India AI Impact Summit.

The prime minister slammed countries and companies that consider AI a strategic asset and develop the technology confidentially.

"Some countries and companies believe AI is a strategic asset and must be developed confidentially. But India thinks differently. We believe AI will benefit the world only when it is shared," he remarked.

Modi underlined the need to develop AI as a "Global Common Good".

The prime minister's comments came a day after senior White House Policy Advisor on Artificial Intelligence Sriram Krishnan said the United States wanted the entire world, including India, to build their AI solutions on top of America's AI stack.

Opposition parties and some tech leaders have criticised Krishnan's comment terming it America's data imperialism.

Accusing the Modi government of compromising India's strategic autonomy in the AI domain, Congress leader Pawan Khera said the White House Policy Advisor "openly speaks about positioning India as a puppet state in the AI ecosystem".

Amid growing concerns over dominance of a handful of American companies in the global AI ecosystem, Prime Minister Modi called for the democratisation of AI and urged that the technology be made human-centric and aligned with the welfare of everyone, particularly for the Global South.

▸ Modi, Page 3B

OpenAI to open B'luru office, Page 11

Reliance plans to invest Rs 10L cr in AI

Reliance Industries Ltd and its telecom arm Jio will invest Rs 10 lakh crore over the next seven years, starting this year, to develop AI infrastructure and services in India, RIL chairman and managing director Mukesh Ambani said on Thursday.

Details on Page 11

Commissions were, are and will be there: Satish Jarkiholi

BENGALURU, DHNS: Public Works Minister Satish Jarkiholi on Thursday admitted that the menace of kickbacks, or 'commissions', still existed and "it will be there in the future as well".

Satish said this even as the Karnataka State Contractors' Association (KSCA) announced a protest on March 6 against the delay in clearing pending bills worth Rs 37,370 crore.

The KSCA has also accused the Congress government of being more corrupt than the previous BJP administration.

"This (commission) was there earlier, it's there today and it'll be there in the future as well. We can't detect where or at what level it exists. How can you do that?" Satish said. "We'll have to regulate it. We have to hit the brakes on it," he said.

In 2023, Congress had attacked the BJP for '40% commission', based on allegations levelled by the KSCA.

On the KSCA now accusing the Congress of corruption, Satish said, "Contractors should bring this issue to the notice of the chief minister and the Lokayukta. Else, allegations will remain only allegations."

▸ Commissions, Page 3B

Freebies hamper development: SC

Laments largesse distribution amid revenue deficit

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

> If you start giving free food from morning to evening, then free cycle, then free electricity, then who will work, and then what will happen to the work culture
>
> Supreme Court

The Supreme Court on Thursday slammed the freebies culture adopted by several states, saying that it is essential to revisit such policies that hamper the country's economic development.

"Most of the states in the country are revenue-deficit states and yet they are offering such freebies overlooking development," a bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi lamented, asking whether the practice amounted to "appeasing".

The court's oral observations came as it took note of a plea by the Tamil Nadu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (TNPDCL), which proposed to provide free electricity to all, irrespective of consumers' financial status.

Tamil Nadu's Assembly polls are likely to be held in April-May.

The bench said while it is understandable if states hand-hold the poor, the nation's economic development gets hampered with this kind of largesse distribution.

▸ Supreme Court, Page 3B

CAA hearing from May 5

The SC has said it will commence on May 5 the final hearing of over 200 petitions, including the lead plea filed by the IUML, challenging the constitutional validity of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019.

Details on Page 9

SC stays HC's BMIC verdict

The Supreme Court has stayed the Karnataka HC's judgment which suggested the scrapping of Bangalore-Mysore Infrastructure Corridor project. The HC had said no purpose would be served by keeping the project alive. Page 3

Woman killed in front of husband

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 63-year-old woman was murdered in front of her wheelchair-bound husband at Nelamangala on Wednesday. The deceased, Shobha, was living with her husband Ranganath (68), who has been bedridden for the past 12 years after a brain stroke. The couple had no children and Shobha was the sole caregiver. The suspect, Shivakumar (45), lived opposite the victim's house.

Details on Page 2

Future-proofing B'luru: DH annual summit returns for 5th edition today

BENGALURU, DHNS

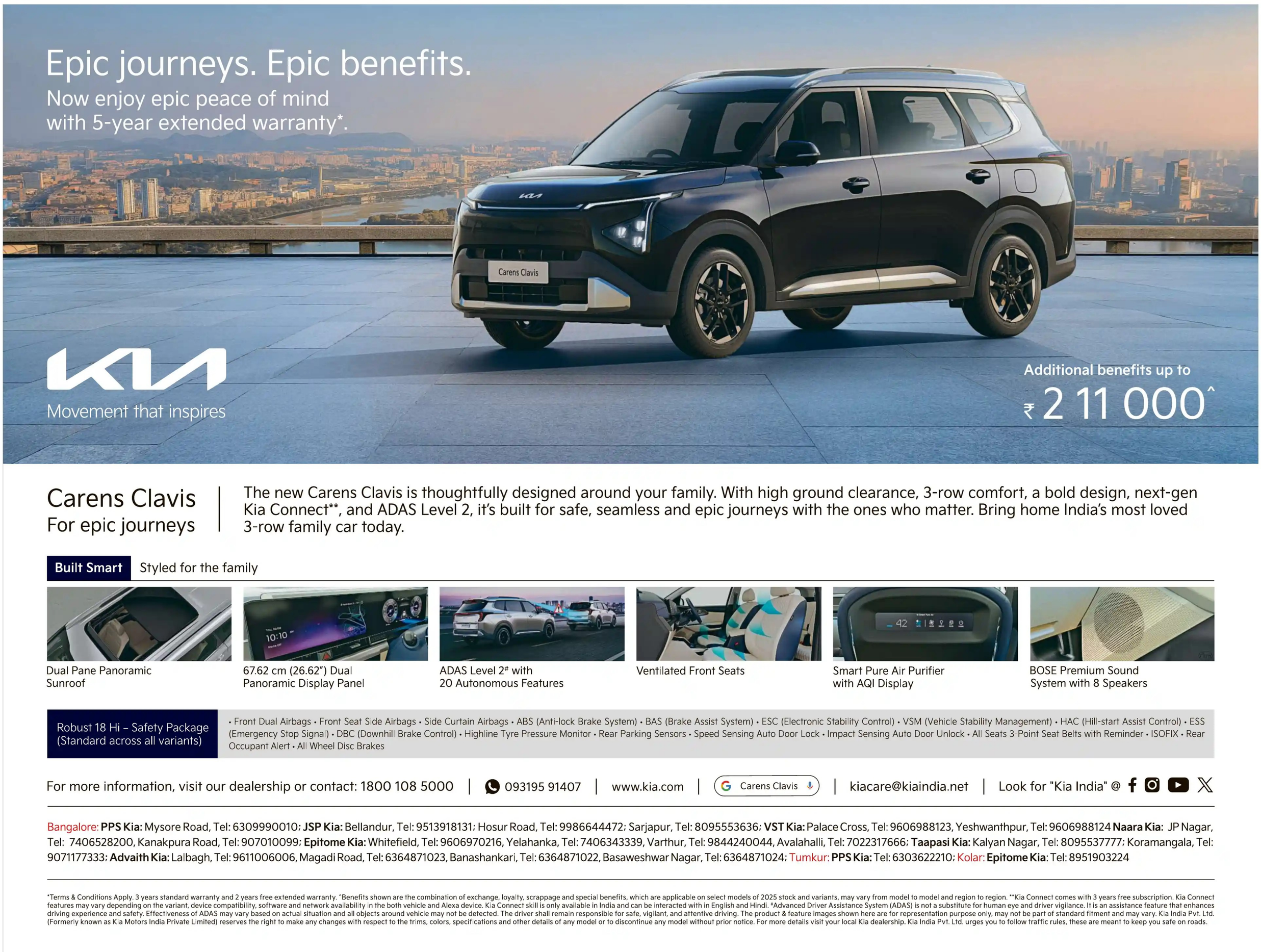
The *DH* Bengaluru 2040 Summit returns for its fifth edition on Friday, bringing together influential thought leaders for a future-focused dialogue on shaping the city ahead.

The summit will serve as a platform to chart the city's course through emerging global opportunities and pressing local challenges — an endeavour that aligns with the *DH* tagline, The Power of Good. It will exchange transformative ideas and align perspectives to build a better tomorrow.

The summit's latest edition will open with a keynote address by cricket legend Rahul Dravid. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will set the tone for the summit, offering insights on 'Bengaluru Fast Forward'.

There will also be a fireside chat with Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Development Minister D K Shivakumar. Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh will deliver the closing keynote address, laying out the vision for Bengaluru 2040.

▸ Summit, Page 3B



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VIOLENCE STRIKES HOME

Woman killed before bedridden husband; suspect caught in 5 hrs

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Nelamangala Town police arrested a 45-year-old provision store owner within five hours of a woman being murdered in front of her wheelchair-bound husband at Pete Beedi on Wednesday.

Police said mounting medical expenses and business losses allegedly drove the accused to commit the crime.

The deceased, Shobha (60), was living with her husband Ranganath, 68, who has been bedridden for the last 12 years after suffering a brain stroke. The couple had no children, and Shobha was the sole caregiver.

The accused, Shivakumar, ran a provision store in the locality and was also involved in a small-scale real estate business. He lived opposite the victim's house.

A senior police officer said that Shivakumar had spent a substantial sum on his mother's medical treatment and had suffered financial setbacks in his business. Struggling to repay debts and desperate to make quick money, he allegedly planned a robbery.

Shobha

On Wednesday around 4 pm, Shivakumar allegedly entered the house through an open door while the couple was sleeping. Shobha woke up, noticed him, and grew suspicious.

Fearing she would identify him and alert others, Shivakumar allegedly attacked her with a knife and slit her throat in front of her bedridden husband.

Despite her attempts to resist, she collapsed and died on the spot. The accused then snatched her gold chain and other ornaments worth Rs 8 lakh and fled.

The crime came to light when the physiotherapist arrived to treat Ranganath in the evening and found Shobha in a pool of blood. The Nelamangala Town police were alerted.

Special teams were formed and CCTV footage from the area was analysed.

"Based on technical evidence and local intelligence, we secured the accused, Shivakumar, within five hours of the incident and recovered the booty. He confessed that financial losses and medical expenses pushed him to commit the offence. He had known the family for 15 years as Shobha regularly visited his provision store. He knew the family background," the officer said.

Aerators in public taps help save Rs 40 cr/yr: BWSSB

Analysis finds mandatory installations in shared spaces slash water usage

BENGALURU, DHNS

An aerator is a device — often attached to a faucet — that mixes air with water to improve flow, reduce splashing, and increase oxygen levels.

Installation of aerators on taps in public spaces has helped save nearly Rs 40 crore annually, an analysis by the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) showed.

During the summer of 2024, when the city faced acute water shortage, the BWSSB made aerators mandatory for taps in public spaces such as hotels, malls and apartments. The reduced consumption has helped save water worth Rs 40 crore, the board said.

Senior BWSSB officials said such simple measures were necessary as permanent solutions would take years to implement.

"Laying new pipelines and getting more water to Bengaluru through new projects takes years. For instance, the Cauvery Stage V project took more than five years to be completed. But such small measures, if rolled out on a large scale, will help save water immediately," the official said.

Officials said the success of the initiative lay in the public response and large-scale adoption.

"Close to 15 lakh taps across the city now have an aerator, which is a huge number. After we started the campaign and created awareness, not just public spaces, but many households also adopted it and this is the reason why we could achieve such savings," another official said.

At many places, including government offices, the BWSSB installed aerators on its own. However, it has not achieved 100 per cent coverage. A few public establishments are yet to install them and the BWSSB is following up with them.

"We do not want it to be one wave where people just install it when we talk about it. We want it to be a continuous process. Every new tap should have an aerator, and any damages should be rectified immediately," the official said.

Aerators bring down water consumption by increasing the pressure of water flow from taps. Senior officials said they could reduce water use by up to 60 per cent.

Special drive collects Rs 14,000 in tobacco fines

BENGALURU, DHNS: A special inspection drive to curb violations of the Tobacco Control Act began on February 18 within the BBMP North zone limits.

The campaign, which runs till February 26, aims to enforce provisions of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act and spread awareness on the harmful effects of tobacco use.

Till February 19, enforcement teams inspected wards 1, 4, 11, 23 and 29, booked cases against violators and collected Rs 14,000 in fines.

The highest fine of Rs 3,000 was collected in Ward 23, Nagawara, from three businesses: Smoke City Chocolate and More, Manju Provision Store, and Rafees Smoke Store.

Officials said the drive targets public smoking, sale of tobacco products to minors, and display of tobacco advertisements in prohibited areas.

Garbage transport to Bellahalli resumes as 2-day standoff ends

BSWML agrees to release village devt funds as residents lift blockade on dump trucks

BENGALURU, DHNS

A heap of waste lies uncleared on Pipeline Road in Hosa Guddadahalli on Thursday. DH PHOTO/PRASHANTH HG

After a two-day impasse, waste collection and transportation resumed on Thursday after the Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML) agreed to release village development funds.

Residents of Bellahalli protested by blocking compactors that came to dump the city's garbage.

The protest erupted after a two-year-old child lost his life in an accident owing to poor road conditions.

Nearly half the city's garbage is sent to Bellahalli for disposal and residents claimed that the movement of heavy vehicles had worsened the roads.

They alleged that BSWML had released little or no funds to improve the condition of these villages.

Several MLAs also supported the protesting residents and alleged the government had delayed releasing funds for development.

Following the crisis, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar warned the protestors that the government would have to invoke the Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA) against them.

DK SHIVAKUMAR
Deputy Chief Minister

"This (sending waste to Bellahalli for disposal) has been the practice, and we are following the same. Now, if (BJP) MLAs oppose it, we will not collect garbage from their constituencies. The people will scold them then.

On Thursday, Shivakumar said he would ask officials to stop collecting garbage from houses in the constituencies of BJP MLAs opposing the dumping of garbage there.

"This has been the practice, and we are following the same. Now, if (BJP) MLAs oppose it, we will not collect garbage from their constituencies. The people will scold them then," the minister said.

He added that the government is trying to improve solid waste management and four land parcels for garbage disposal have been identified. "There is some problem with two land parcels. However, the other two have been identified and a tender has also been invited," Shivakumar said.

Kogilu incident

This is the second time BSWML has come under scrutiny recently.

After an encroachment removal drive in Kogilu left many families homeless, residents alleged that the BSWML failed to follow due procedure.

In this case, too, residents living near the Bellahalli landfill alleged that the BSWML failed to release funds to improve their living conditions.

80-year-old charred to death in suspected short circuit fire

BENGALURU, DHNS: An 80-year-old man was charred to death in a suspected short circuit at his house in Kengeri on Wednesday night.

The deceased was identified as Mylaraappa, a resident of Thimmarayappa Circle in Mailasandra. He was living alone in a house adjacent to his granddaughter's house.

A relative noticed the house on fire. With help from neighbours, the fire was doused. When the family members entered the house, they found Mylaraappa's burnt body. He had undergone amputation of his left leg due to gangrene and had difficulty moving.

68 'mule herders' arrested in Rs 85-crore scam

BENGALURU, DHNS

Between December 2025 and February 2026, investigators from the Cyber Command Centre (CCC) of the Karnataka Police arrested 68 people as part of their ongoing efforts to dismantle mule account networks in the state.

Officials said these 68 people were "mule herders". These herders' aggregate mule accounts, create mule bank accounts, hoard them, and either sell or rent them to cyber criminals as required for a fee or commission.

Mule accounts are bank accounts used to launder money gained by cybercriminals by cheating people.

Popular modus operandi includes digital arrest and investment scams, otherwise known as pig butchering.

These mule accounts help scamsters layer crime proceeds and launder them. In some cases, the money is physically withdrawn or converted to cryptocurrency and handed to kingpins outside the country, officials said.

The sustained efforts to dismantle mule account networks are overseen by Pronab Mohanty, Director General of Police (DGP), Cyber Command, Karnataka.

Official figures reveal 60 cases have been registered and 869 mule accounts identified. These accounts saw transactions of Rs 85.05 crore, of which Rs 13.43 crore are on hold or frozen.

Further, searches at 35 locations led investigators to recover 35 ATM cards, 37 passbooks, 80 mobile phones, 28 cheque books and 22 SIM cards.

"Mule herders collected personal information and documents from many people and also opened multiple bank accounts in the names of their relatives. These accounts were operated in a business-like manner," an official statement from the Cyber Command said.

What are mule accounts?

These are bank accounts used to launder money stolen through cyber fraud. They are often linked to digital arrest scams and investment cons, also known as "pig butchering".

URBAN BLOOM

Tabebuia rosea bursts into vibrant pink, brightening Bengaluru's streets and adding a cheerful touch to the daily commute. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

Rs 1 crore each for families of 3 Bescom staff killed on duty

BENGALURU, DHNS: Energy Minister KJ George distributed compensation cheques of Rs 1 crore each to the families of three Bescom employees who lost their lives while on duty.

The minister met the bereaved families at the Bescom corporate office and handed over the cheques.

The beneficiaries include V Keerthana, wife of Uday Kumar, an assistant powerman from the Gauribidanur subdivision who died of electrocution; Dakshayini, wife of BV Manjappa, a powerman from the Gudibande subdivision who was killed in a road accident; and Muniratnamma, wife of Amarnath, a powerman from the Chintamani subdivision who also died in a road accident.

"Our department accords the highest priority to the safety of staff, especially linemen. Personal protective equipment is provided to them. However, in the event of unforeseen incidents resulting in death, we extend support to the families of the deceased employees. These cheques have been issued under the insurance benefits of the Super Salary Account of Union Bank of India," the minister said.

Additional Chief Secretary of the Energy Department Gaurav Gupta, KPTCL Managing Director Ram Prasath Manohar, Bescom Managing Director N Shivashankara, and other senior officials were present.

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St Joseph's University hosted its inaugural Scholarship Day, titled 'Roots to Wings', on February 13. Among those present were Markus Obkircher, Director and Head of Customer Solutions R&D (Chemistry) at Merck KGaA; Chancellor Rev Fr Dionysius Vaz; Vice-Chancellor Fr Victor Lobo; Finance Officer and Convenor Fr Arun Prashanth D'Souza; along with other distinguished guests.

Retd Isro employee remanded to judicial custody for wife's murder

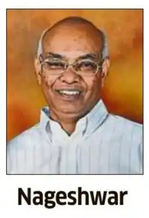
BENGALURU, DHNS: The body of Sandhya Sri (63), who was strangled to death by her husband on Wednesday morning, was handed over to her relatives after completion of the postmortem on Thursday.

The last rites were performed at the Wilson Garden crematorium in the presence of close family members and relatives.

The accused, K Nageshwar Rao, 76, a retired Isro employee, has been remanded to judicial custody after he reportedly confessed to the crime during interrogation.

A senior police officer said that Rao admitted to strangling his wife Sandhya, a painter, at their residence following mental distress and also decided to end his life.

Sandhya Sri


Nageshwar

He was produced before a magistrate after his arrest and subsequently sent to judicial custody.

After the legal formalities were completed, the body was handed over to the relatives, who live in Jeevan Bima Nagar.

The couple's only daughter, who resides in New Jersey in the United States, is said to be in deep trauma following the incident. Owing to her emotional condition and the time required to make travel arrangements, she could not fly to Bengaluru.

Considering the circumstances, the relatives decided not to delay the funeral and performed the last rites, the police officer said.

The incident occurred at 10.30 am in an apartment at Bommanahalli near Mandur.

After strangling his wife, Rao called a neighbour around 11 am and informed him about what he had done. The neighbour contacted a community doctor, who alerted the Avalahalli police. Rao was then taken into police custody.

Priest arrested for submitting fake surety in nine cases

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Halasuru Gate police have arrested a 66-year-old priest for submitting forged documents to act as surety in nine different criminal cases before a Bengaluru city civil court.

MH Nagaraju, also known as Achari, a priest at an Anjaneya temple in Kudur, Magadi taluk, allegedly submitted fabricated RTC extracts, land records, and fake identity documents in the name of one Shivakumar to secure bail for multiple accused persons.

The fraud came to light during verification of revenue records submitted before the CCH-65 court in connection with a sessions case.

Preliminary inquiries revealed that Nagaraju had allegedly impersonated a landowner and submitted forged documents to stand surety in at least nine cases.

Nagaraju had been using his identity to stand surety for accused persons in several criminal cases, charging between Rs 10,000 and Rs 20,000 per case. In some instances, he allegedly collaborated with advocates to facilitate the process.

Notably, he had previously stood surety for an MLA in a criminal case, for which he was arrested by city police at the time. "We are verifying how many such cases he has been involved in," a senior police officer said.

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◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

Bharatiya Vidwat Parishat: Women's conference; Ahalya S, Tejaswini Anantakumar, Vijayalakshmi Balekundri and others; Krishnaraja Parishanmandira, Kannada Sahitya Parishat, Chamarajapet; 10 am.

Indian Heritage Academy: Discussion on identity and culture in Kannada cinema; Academy premises, Koramangala; 6.30 pm.

CULTURAL

Indian Council for Cultural Relations: Bharatanatya recital by Mandara CK; Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Race Course Road; 6 pm.

Udupa Foundation: Music by Begam Parveen Sultan, Ravindra Katoti, Ojas Adya and Purbayan Chatterjee; Chowdaiah Memorial Hall, Vyalikaval; 7 pm.

Janapadaru Samsnkrutika Vedike: Staging of play 'Jnana Degula', directed by Siddeshwara Nanasumane; BP Wadia Hall, Basavanagudi; from 7 pm onwards.

Aart exhibition: 'Threads of Thoughts'; Art House, Palace Road, Vasantnagar; 6 pm.

RELIGIOUS

Chandramouleshwara Swamy Temple: Kakadarati, bhajans and puja; Gandhinagar; 5 am.

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST

Mainly clear sky

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	31.0°C
Minimum	17.0°C
Rainfall	--
Humidity	66%
Sunset (Feb 20)	6:26 pm
Sunrise (Feb 21)	6:41 am
Moonrise	7:49 am
Moonset	8:08 pm

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

OPEN DAY

Indian Institute of Astrophysics opens doors to public on February 21

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Indian Institute of Astrophysics will celebrate National Science Day as IIA Open Day on February 21 from 9.30 am to 5.30 pm at its Koramangala campus. The event is open to the public and entry is free.

The institute will host demonstrations and interactive experiments on astronomy and basic physics, along with films, photographs and walk-through exhibits on research at IIA and space sciences.

External organisations such as the Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium, VITM and amateur astronomy groups, besides astronomy entrepreneurs, will set up stalls.

Highlights include a tethered balloon demonstration, optics lab laser experiments, viewing of sunspots and solar spectra, exhibits on Gaganyaan, ancient Indian astronomy instruments, multi wavelength astronomy, atmospheric and optical phenomena, a walk-through space corridor, interaction with scientists, to-scale solar system model, measuring the size of the Sun, astronomy games for children, IIA archives with artefacts from the 1700s, sale of astronomy merchandise, and a science treasure hunt.

The Survey of India will also have exhibits at the adjacent campus.

There will be a public talk on the solar system at 11 am in Kannada by Pavan Gramapurohit; a Kannada science play at 12.30 pm; and a talk on merging stars at 3 pm in English by Annapurni Subramaniam. Periodic tours of the exhibits in Kannada will be organised.

Visitors can use limited parking inside the Survey of India quarters, Gate 2, next to Union Bank.

CT/MRI scans in govt hosps: New arrangements amid payment delays

BENGALURU, DHNS: The government has collaborated with Krsnaa Diagnostics Limited to provide CT scan services in 13 district hospitals and MRI scan services in five districts under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model.

The services were briefly stopped due to the non-payment claims by the diagnostics.

To ensure continued and uninterrupted CT and MRI services in the district hospitals, the government has made alternative arrangements with the available government, private medical colleges, private hospitals and institutions empanelled under Suvarana Aarogya Suraksha Trust (SAST) by mapping the district hospitals to the nearest institutions within the same district.

As per the existing norms, services are provided free for Below Poverty Level (BPL) patients and 30% subsidised for Above Poverty Level (APL) patients in the identified institutions.

Meanwhile, Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly R Ashoka alleged that the state's public healthcare system is "crumbling" under the Congress government, following protests by patients and their relatives at the Kolar district hospital after critical diagnostic services, like CT and MRI scans, were halted.

Ashoka shared on his X handle a letter written by Krsnaa Diagnostics Limited to the NHM, Karnataka, seeking the release of pending dues and warning of temporary suspension of CT and MRI services from February 18 if payments were not cleared.

He said, "Rs 143.78 crore unpaid. Three years of delay. Repeated representations ignored. This is not a minor administrative lapse. This is financial paralysis."

DKS calls for street-wise, house-wise voter mapping

Flags discrepancies in electoral rolls, says entire street left out of voter list

BENGALURU, DHNS

Deputy Chief Minister and Karnataka Congress president D K Shivakumar has asked the State Election Commission (SEC) to conduct a "comprehensive street-wise and house-wise mapping" of voters in Bengaluru to address "serious and widespread" errors in the electoral rolls.

In a petition to State Election Commissioner G S Sangreshi, Shivakumar said every street should be mapped to the correct polling station, every street to a house and every voter to the house.

"Such a Street-House-Voter mapping will ensure accuracy, prevent duplication and eliminate arbitrary shifting or deletion of voters," Shivakumar, who is also the Bengaluru Urban Development minister, stated.

The SEC is preparing the electoral rolls under the Greater Bengaluru Area (GBA) for the impending elections to the five municipal corporations in the city. As per a Supreme Court directive, Bengaluru municipal elections should happen before June 30.

Shivakumar has flagged "numerous discrepancies" in the existing electoral rolls prepared by the Election Commission: members of one family being allotted different polling stations, incorrect house numbers, duplicate/missing entries and "long-standing residents being deleted without notice."

One of the discrepancies cited by Shivakumar is from the Padmanabhanagar constituency represented by Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka. "Voters of 6th cross, Anjaneya Temple Road, Ittamadu...have been totally excluded from the electoral rolls," he stated.

Another discrepancy raised by Shivakumar is the use of an Aadhaar card as the photograph in the voter list.

"These errors are not isolated, but appear to be systemic," Shivakumar stated, adding that such "alarming" discrepancies "seriously undermine the credibility of the electoral process."

Shivakumar urged the SEC to order an "immediate special inquiry" and act against erring persons. He also sought a "rectification drive" so that "no eligible voter is denied their constitutional right to vote."

Shivakumar's petition ties into the Congress' nationwide campaign against 'Vote Chori', accusing the EC of colluding with the BJP to manipulate polls.

SC stays HC's suggestion to scrap BMIC project

NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court has stayed the Karnataka High Court's January 9, 2026, judgment, which suggested the scrapping of the Bangalore-Mysore Infrastructure Corridor (BMIC) project mooted for decongesting Bengaluru city.

The HC had said no purpose would be served for keeping the project alive when, in more than 25 years, only one km of highway had been constructed.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Kumar and K Vinod Chandran suspended the operation of paragraphs 77 and 78 of the judgment after hearing senior advocates Kapil Sibal, Mukul Rohatgi and A N S Nadkarni on behalf of project proponent NICE Ltd and another.

In its order on February 16, the court issued notice to private landowners and others, while agreeing to examine the plea against the judgment. It fixed the matter for consideration on April 9.

"The operation of the said paragraphs shall remain stayed meanwhile," the bench said.

In its decision, the high court had come down heavily on Nandi Infrastructure Corridor Enterprise (NICE), Nandi Economic Corridor Enterprise Limited (NECE) and state authorities for "killing" the (BMIC) project "at the cost of citizens and environment".

A division bench of Justices D K Singh and Venkatesh Naik T directed the state government to take a re-look at the project by discarding the old one.

The bench made these observations while dismissing a petition seeking sites as promised, instead of about eight acres of land acquired in Kommaghatta village, Kengeri hobli, Bengaluru South taluk, for the project.

The BMIC project (framework agreement of 1997) was to construct an expressway between Bengaluru and Mysuru, a peripheral road connecting national highways on the outskirts of Bengaluru and link roads.

'False claims': KMF files plaint against dermatologist

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) on Thursday filed a complaint against a city-based dermatologist for allegedly making reels to claim Nandini milk and dairy products are unsafe and sharing them on social media. KMF also issued a public notice strongly refuting the claims.

Based on a complaint, Malleshwaram police have registered a case against Dr Sharapova Padma, working as a dermatologist in a private hospital in Malleshwaram and also owns a clinic in Malur in Kolar district.

According to KMF authorities, the dermatologist had used Instagram and other social media platforms to project certain Nandini products as unsafe for consumption. The posts allegedly questioned the quality and safety standards of the federation's milk and milk products, triggering concern among consumers.

Terming the allegations "baseless and unscientific," KMF stated that the claims had caused "unnecessary panic and confusion" among crores of consumers who have trusted the Nandini brand for decades.

In its public notice, KMF said, "It has come to our attention that baseless and false allegations have been made against a few Nandini products using Instagram and other social media platforms, projecting Nandini products as unsafe for consumption."

The federation asserted that it strictly adheres to safety protocols and approved methods prescribed by statutory authorities, including the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India. "We request consumers not to get confused by baseless allegations and assure that all our milk and milk products are safe for consumption," the notice stated.

A senior police officer said that they are gathering evidences for further investigation.

RTC staff hold stir; ops not hit

BENGALURU, DHNS

Thousands of Road Transport Corporation (RTC) employees went ahead with a protest on Thursday, a day after the government announced it would clear 26 months' arrears and hold talks on a pay hike from Apr 1, 2025.

While bus operations remained unaffected, RTC workers from across Karnataka participated in the 'Bengaluru Chalo' protest at Freedom Park.

RTC employees raise slogas during their protest at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Thursday. DH PHOTO

The protest was called by the Joint Action Committee of the Trade Unions of KSRTC, demanding payment of Rs 1,785 crore as arrears for 38 months (Jan 1, 2020, to Feb 28, 2023) and a 25% pay hike from Jan 1, 2024.

The government had earlier implemented a 15% hike for 1.1 lakh RTC employees from Mar 1, 2023, and assured of clearing arrears for 38 months before that.

But, based on the M R Sreenivasa Murthy committee report, it later agreed to clear arrears for only 14 months. It promised fresh hike from Apr 1, 2026, instead of Apr 1, 2024, as the unions demanded.

Revising its stance on Wednesday, the government issued an order to clear arrears for another 12 months (Jan 1 to Dec 31, 2021) and advanced new hike to April 1, 2025.

The committee said both demands—38 months' arrears and pay hike from April 1, 2024—were non-negotiable.

D A Vijaya Bhaskar, general secretary, KSRTC Staff and Workers' Federation, which is part of the committee said: "We have decided to defer the agitation to Mar 2."

KSRTC MD Akram Pasha visited the protest venue and urged the employees to call it off, citing revised offer.

Pasha told *DH* that since the last hike took effect from Mar 1, 2023, next revision was technically due only after 4 years (in 2027), but government advanced it to 2025.

Bhaskar said: "All we're asking for is to be a part of the decision-making process. The KSRTC MD must call a meeting to discuss wage hike percentage. If that's done, then we will call off the agitation."

Pasha said the meeting would be called after consultations with transport minister.

PURAVANKARA
PRESENTS

DH BENGALURU 2040 SUMMIT

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Chief Secretary, Govt. of Karnataka

Dinesh G. Rao
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Dr. C N Ashwath Narayan
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Nalini Malaviya
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Mallanna Sasalu
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When will Bengaluru air taxis take off?

Two have temporarily paused and plan to resume, while another is in the testing phase

BARKHA KUMARI
TEAM METROLIFE

Air taxis as a mobility solution in Bengaluru are still a work in progress. Two operators that once ran seat-sharing helicopters have temporarily paused services, while another player is targeting a launch only by 2029-2030. *Metrolife* takes stock of the work needed to make them a reality.

In December, Sarla Aviation completed ground testing of the half-scale prototype of their aircraft, weighing 700 kg, at its facility in Hosur.

Helipad woes

Thumby Aviation operated an airport shuttle service between Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) and Electronics City, Whitefield, and HAL Airport for two years, until the pandemic struck in 2020. The Kerala-based company ran at least two trips a day using its six-seater helicopters. It charged Rs 3,500-Rs 4,500 per seat and achieved an occupancy rate of 60%.

However, the service could not be revived. Its CEO, Govind Nair, claims that after KIA's expansion, their helipad became "sandwiched" between the old and new runways, making air taxi operations unviable. And while Bengaluru has over 90 rooftop helipads, current policies do not permit their use for transport. "Most are built for fire evacuation. But a recent exception in Delhi, where a single-engine helicopter was allowed to land on a rooftop helipad for medical purposes, has given us hope. We plan to use that precedent to push for access for urban mobility," Nair adds.

Meanwhile, two or three times a month, industrialists and CXOs hire an entire helicopter from them for intra-city commutes at Rs 2.5 lakh each trip. This service is available between Jakkur Aerodrome and HAL Airport or Whitefield, where they land on a helipad located in a hospital.

Aircraft crunch

Blade India ran its pay-per-seat air taxi service in Bengaluru from December 2021 to January 2023. Priced at Rs 4,500 plus taxes, it cut commute time between KIA and HAL Airport from about an hour to 15-20 minutes.

However, both its Bengaluru and Mumbai operations are currently on pause, which the company attributes to the "unavailability of suitable aircraft". They told *Metrolife* that India has around 250 helicopters, of which 60% are used for religious tourism or offshore oil and gas operations, leaving very few for civilian mobility. By comparison, New York City alone has a fleet of about 1,800 helicopters, they add.

The Maharashtra-based company plans to resume its Bengaluru service in the "near term", citing strong demand from business travellers and entrepreneurs during its earlier run. Across Bengaluru and Mumbai, it completed more than 2,500 flights, achieved 80% occupancy on its five-seater aircraft, and had 43% repeat customers. It has now signed MoUs with advanced air mobility manufacturers to explore introducing electric and hybrid-electric aircraft in India to address the shortage.

Ground testing

Sarla Aviation has partnered with Bangalore International Airport Limited to operate electric air taxis between KIA and Electronics City, with fares projected at Rs 1,700. In December, the team tested a half-scale prototype of its eVTOL (electric vertical take-off and landing) aircraft at its Hosur facility, keeping it tethered to the ground.

Its founder and CTO Rakesh Gaonkar shared the results of the testing: the propulsion system performed well under simulated hover conditions, the motor controllers and electronics remained stable, and the prototype generated enough lift to hover, take off, and carry its load. The Bengaluru startup is now fine-tuning the aircraft's core systems, including "the powertrain, avionics, and flight control laws". Next, it plans to test actual hovering, forward flight, and possibly full airborne cruising by the end of 2026. It hopes to deploy its seven-seater air taxis by 2029-2030.

It is also evaluating operations to Whitefield, HAL Airport, HSR Layout, Tumakuru, and Hosur, while working to re-certify existing rooftop helipads in the city for eVTOL use. "Each helipad is different. We are assessing structural feasibility, airspace regulations, and any modifications that might be needed," Gaonkar says.

POPCORN

AI yo doggie

The AI summit in Delhi has been an embarrassment. A university showcased a Chinese robotic dog, claiming it was something it had developed in India by spending a fortune. A loquacious professor of communication presented it with aplomb, and when the university's claim was busted, she came back to defend it equally eloquently. Last we heard, the university had thrown her under the bus.

She is now probably singing that old song, "PR kiya to darna kya?/PR kiya koi chori nahin ki..."

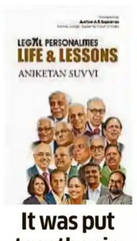
EVENTS

Double-bill concert
Vocalist Ashwini Bhide Deshpande and sarod artiste Pratik Shrivastava will perform as part of the 'Baithak' concert series on February 21, 7 pm, at Sabha Blr, Kamaraj Road. Tickets online.

Dance theatre
'Giridhari', a dance-theatrical inspired by the 'Govardhana Giridhara' episode from the 'Bhagavata', will be presented on February 21 and 22, 6.30 pm, at Dayananda Sagar auditorium, Kumaraswamy Layout. The show by Swaravi Arts Foundation features over 50 Bharatanatyam dancers, and is choreographed by Varsha Raviprakasha. Tickets online.

Poetry meet
Siddharth Surana will host 'Humzubaan', a session of Hindi and Urdu poetry, on February 22, 5.30 pm, at Atta Galatta, Indiranagar. Entry free. Visit @attagalatta on Instagram for details.

Book on Karnataka's legal luminaries set for launch



It was put together in six months.

Bengaluru-based advocate Aniketan Suvvi will release his debut book, 'Legal Personalities: Life & Lessons', on Sunday. It offers a glimpse into the minds of some of Karnataka's most respected legal figures.

It is a compilation of Suvvi's interactions with 16 judges, senior advocates and legal scholars, including former Chief Justice of India M N Venkatachaliah and former Supreme Court judge A S Bopanna, who has also written the book's foreword. Others featured include justices Shivaraj Patil, Santosh Hegde and R V Raveendran, as well as advocates such as Banu Mushtaq, Nalini Mayegowda and Mohan V Katarki.

"The book is about how a young advocate like me views these stalwarts and interprets their journeys," shares the 26-year-old. It also throws light on their values, and he hopes these will serve as "a roadmap for the next generation of legal minds".

Suvvi, who enrolled with the Karnataka State Bar Council in 2022 and began full-time practice last year, says a meeting with senior advocate B V Acharya sparked the idea for the book. "He had preserved a few of my newspaper articles in a notebook. A person of that stature recognising a youngster meant a lot to me," he says.

Launch on February 22, 10.30 am, at Dr H N Multimedia Hall, National College, Basavanagudi. Entry free. To order, call 94485 20414.

Unviable: Dog lovers livid over stray adoption drive

Authorities should ramp up Animal Birth Control programme instead, activists say

RASHMI RAJAGOPAL
TEAM METROLIFE

Not all street dogs adjust to new, confined spaces. DH PHOTO/B K JANARDHAN

The GBA's stray dog adoption drive, announced towards the end of last year, has drawn flak from animal rights activists.

The exercise shifts responsibility from the civic body and puts further pressure on overburdened dog caretakers instead of addressing the problem, they say. The drive, announced across the city's municipal corporations, came at a time when street dog overpopulation and increasing dog bite incidents raised concerns about citizen safety.

Last week, it was announced that a woman had adopted 20 dogs in the North City Corporation. An activist pointed out that while it comes as a positive development, the truth is that adopters often end up adopting the dogs because they are in poor health or neglected. "The adopter feels it inhumane to leave them in a state of neglect," the activist said.

A very small number of people have come forward to adopt the dogs since the drive was launched, shares Sunil Kumar, commissioner, North City Corporation. After one of the Supreme Court orders, the dogs were initially impounded and placed in observation centres attached to Animal Birth Control (ABC) centres. However, after dog lovers objected, the corporation discontinued the practice. He reveals that an average of 10-12 dogs are sent to animal welfare NGOs daily, usually after the corporation receives a complaint from residents. "We determine if they are neutered. If not, we complete the procedure before sending them to the NGO," he explains.

Sadhana Hegde, founder, Sahavarthin Animal Welfare Trust, points out that the adoption drive ends up putting the onus on animal lovers, community feeders and caretakers, who are already burdened with multiple dogs.

"I have six dogs, some of which are rescues. Apart from the financial burden, one often has to grapple with various kinds of problems. It is very difficult for me to find a house, for instance. I have had to change homes multiple times because of neighbours' complaints," she reveals.

She believes the answer lies in ramping up the ABC programme, which will be effective in reducing the dog population. Kumar states that the corporation plans to scale up the programme and increase the capacity of the existing centres, but nothing has been decided yet. He adds that anyone is free to adopt the dogs, and clarifies that the drive is not necessarily aimed at individuals who are already caring for multiple canines. Nevina Kamath and a group of other activists plan to take up the issue with the Karnataka Animal Welfare Board and the Animal Welfare Board of India. "Not every dog that has grown up on the streets will be happy when confined in small spaces. Additionally, removing dogs from the streets just makes space for the next pack of dogs," she explains, adding that familiar street dogs often offer security, especially for women who are returning home late at night. "I feed one female dog on my street, and when I return home at night, I feel safer knowing she is around," she shares.

Sights, smells, sounds focus of 8-day arts festival

SATHVI G BHAT
TEAM METROLIFE

The Bangalore International Centre (BIC) will host the second edition of its signature performing arts festival, 'Pravaha'. This year's theme is 'The Body as Space', and 15 sensory experiences have been curated. The line-up includes theatre, concerts, exhibitions and lectures. One of the highlights is 'First-Hand', in which audiences will listen to a story narrated by artist Nitish Jain through earphones while wearing blindfolds. They will also experience different smells, physical objects and tasting samples. Artist Indu Anthony will present a lecture-demonstration based on her book 'Vasané', which draws inspiration from prominent scents of Bengaluru. Pianist Karl Lutchmayer will present a recital inspired by 12 different scents, which the audience can smell through perfume strips. Sandhya Kannan, head of programmes at BIC, says, "The festival is trying to help people notice how their bodies react to things, because that deepens their understanding of objects and experiences," she says.

February 22 to March 1 at BIC, Domlur. Visit bangaloreinternationalcentre.org for details..

'Public transport still not disabled friendly'

Wheelchair users say they face significant challenges like uneven roads even to reach a bus stop

SHRADDHA A K
TEAM METROLIFE

A blind commuter boarding a BMTC bus. PIC FOR REPRESENTATION/DH PHOTO/B K JANARDHAN

A viral video shared on X showing a wheelchair user being denied entry on a bus in Mumbai has sparked renewed discussions about the poor state of inclusivity in India. The incident has resonated with disability advocates and wheelchair users in the city, who say significant gaps remain across road infrastructure and public transport systems.

Six disability activists and wheelchair users who *Metrolife* spoke to acknowledged that Bengaluru has made strides in certain areas, such as metro station accessibility. However, they underscored that last-mile connectivity remains a major barrier to true inclusivity. Bus stops are often spaced far apart, making travel to and from them exhausting and nearly impossible for wheelchair users and those who use crutches, prosthetics and walkers.

Ashwin Karthik, a wheelchair user and technical engineering programme manager, expressed his frustration with the city's pedestrian infrastructure. "Commuting in a wheelchair is next to impossible due to the lack of ramps on footpaths and uneven pavements. This often forces wheelchair users onto busy roads just to reach a bus stop," he said.

Disability rights activist Dr Rajalakshmi S J echoed his concerns about difficulty of accessing distant bus stops. She said the challenges begin well before reaching a bus stand as wheelchair users have to navigate broken roads and steep gradients.

Vishnu Soman, cofounder of The Inclusion Movement, believes that while infrastructural improvements are essential, he said bus conductors must be more attentive to the needs of people with various kinds of disabilities.

These activists add that accessible taxis are hard to find, and autorickshaws are often impractical as they lack space for wheelchair users travelling with assistants. "As a result, those who can afford personal transport opt for it," said Karthik.

Authorities say...

The Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) asserts that its fleet of electric buses is equipped with ramps and staffed by trained personnel. G T Prabhakar Reddy, chief traffic manager at BMTC, said all electric buses are wheelchair-friendly. He added that while the new fleet of regular buses does not have ramps, the footboards are designed to be lower (about 400 mm from the ground compared to the earlier 1,000 mm) to help blind commuters and amputees board and alight more easily.

APP TO AUDIT

Disability rights activists N Sreenivasan and K P Sunil Kumar developed the 'Yes to Access' app to enable citizens to audit and rate public transport and buildings for accessibility. They say the government has formulated 80 guidelines for accessibility in public transport. They have submitted their findings to BMTC. The app is available on Android and iOS.

Maternity shoot tragedy raises safety concerns

In the absence of formal guidelines, city photographers outline the precautions they follow

TINI SARA ANIEN
TEAM METROLIFE

A three-year-old died during a maternity photoshoot on the outskirts of Bengaluru recently. He reportedly slipped into an artificial pool created for photoshoot purposes. A case of unnatural death has been registered.

City-based photographers say there is no industry body governing their field, and therefore there are no safety guidelines for such shoots. They rely on self-regulation to ensure that pregnant women are comfortable and that the shoot does not become chaotic.

Removing sharp props

If a couple brings a toddler to a shoot, photographers advise them to bring a family member or nanny to supervise the child. Without supervision, they say, the shoot can become chaotic and physically taxing for the mother-to-be.

Maternity and baby photographer Pranjal Chordia says her team removes all "sharp or distracting props" when toddlers are part of the shoot.

"We schedule a detailed call to discuss the shoot and what they should carry. We ask them to bring their medication, some snacks, and sweets for energy," she says. They also ensure that female clients get to take breaks whenever they need.

To avoid exhaustion, photographers choose locations close to the couple's home to reduce travel time and keep outfit changes to a minimum. According to maternity and newborn photographer Yogananda R, safety planning begins with choosing the right location. "Even for indoor shoots, we ask women to avoid heavy outfits that may tire them," he says. For outdoor sessions that require extensive travel, he advises consulting the family doctor beforehand. Locations with water bodies and high elevations are avoided. Yogananda carries basic first-aid supplies on the shoot. "During our recce, we also check the nearest medical facilities," he says.

Wedding photographer Deepak Vijay, who occasionally handles maternity shoots, recalls a client who insisted on travelling to Nandi Hills during the fifth month of her pregnancy. "We had advised against long travel. A couple of weeks later, she suffered a miscarriage. We can't say it was because of the shoot, but we have become doubly cautious since," he says. He now limits locations to within a 10 km radius and prefers indoor setups. He avoids outdoor locations with steps, steep climbs and uneven terrain.

Photographer Yogananda R at a recent indoor maternity shoot.

Lifestyle photographer Sandeep M V says they keep maternity shoots short and arrange for refreshments, seating and an assistant. "We also explain the pros and cons of any experimental shot," he says.

Written acknowledgement

Vijay says they send the terms and conditions of the shoot to couples, but many do not read them. After the recent tragedy, he and Yogananda plan to ask couples to send a written acknowledgement confirming that they have read the terms. Yogananda says he will insist that an adult accompany any child present at a shoot, or he will decline the assignment. He also urges studios with artificially constructed water bodies to have lifeguards and rescue equipment on hand.

Sandeep adds that he will focus on limiting the number of people at shoots, as fewer people mean less chaos.

BJP will come to power on its own, says Yediyurappa

Agrawal hints at polls being led by current state leadership

BENGALURU, DHNS

With two years left for the next Assembly election, BJP veteran B S Yediyurappa sounded the poll bugle Thursday by claiming that the BJP would assume power "on its own," signaling that the saffron party has its own plans that may or may not include the JD(S), its alliance partner.

"We should come to power in the upcoming Assembly elections on our strength and uproot this corrupt Congress government. If all the senior leaders here make a decision, I don't think it's difficult," Yediyurappa, the former chief minister and the BJP Parliamentary Board member, said.

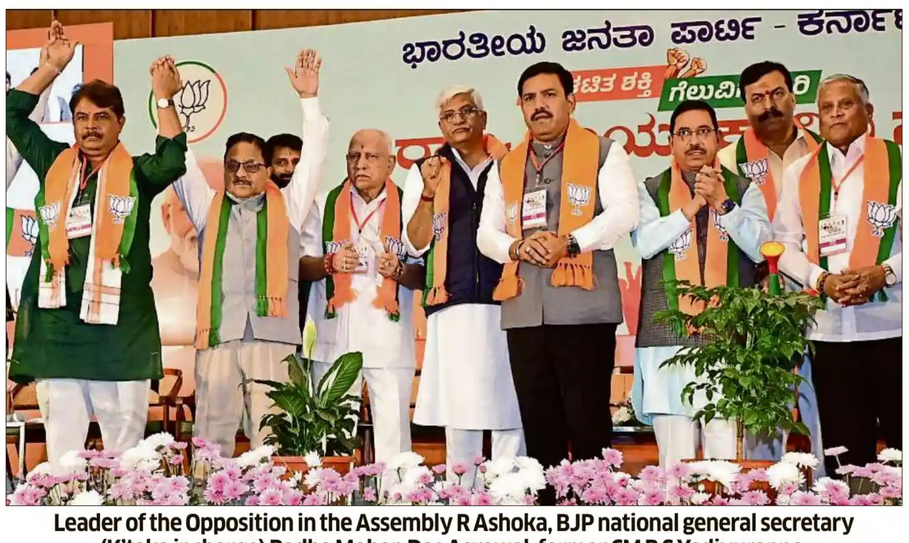
Yediyurappa's statement is very similar to his son and BJP state president B Y Vijayendra's claim in December 2025 that the saffron party would win "130-140 seats on its own" in the upcoming elections.

BJP national general secretary and Karnataka in-charge Radha Mohan Das Agrawal hailed the leadership of BJP state president B Y Vijayendra, Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly R Ashoka and his Council counterpart Chalavadi Narayanaswamy.

"I am confident that under the leadership of this team, BJP will get a historic verdict in the upcoming elections," Agarwal said, hinting at the trio, although he didn't explicitly mention their names again.

Agrawal accused the Congress government of trying to bring the Muslim community "within the ambit" of the Rohit Vemula Act alongside SC, ST and OBC communities.

Speaking on the occasion, Vijayendra slammed the ruling Congress saying, "After the Congress came to power, there have been murders of Hindu (Hindutva) activists and Dalits. In Yellapur, a Dalit woman was killed, and in Koppal, a Dalit person was killed, but there hasn't been any compensation." He hoped for a verdict in the 2028 Assembly polls that would be "written in gold," and urged workers to struggle day and night to bring back the "glory days" of the BJP.



Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly R Ashoka, BJP national general secretary (K'taka incharge) Radha Mohan Das Agrawal, former CM B S Yediyurappa, Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, BJP state president B Y Vijayendra, union ministers Pralhad Joshi and V Somanna at the party's special state executive meeting in Bengaluru on Thursday. DH PHOTO/B K JANARDHAN

Future-proofing B'luru: DH annual summit today

Summit, from Page 1

Amanda Puravankara, Executive Director—Provident Housing Ltd, Puravankara, will deliver a special address. The summit will host policymakers, industry leaders, entrepreneurs, bureaucrats, urban planners, mobility experts, artistes and academics in curated panel discussions.

The discussions will be focused on a single agenda—to sculpt a smarter, more sustainable and exciting future for our city. Designed as the voice of the invested Bengalurean, the summit aims to inspire tangible, positive action on the ground.

The panel discussions will cover AI in Higher Education; Building a Global Cultural Capital; Building Bengaluru Faster and Smarter; A Framework for Bengaluru's Future Infrastructure; The Future of Jobs; Can Bengaluru Beat Traffic?; The AI–MedTech Frontier; Bengaluru's Clean Energy Transition; The Future of Policing in Bengaluru; and Pathways to a Water-Secure Bengaluru.

The event will also feature a special stand-up performance by Atul Khatri.

Freebies hamper development...

Supreme Court, from Page 1

"What kind of culture are we developing in India? It is understandable that as part of the welfare measure you want to provide to those who are incapable of paying electricity charges," the bench said.

The court said states should work to create more job opportunities instead of giving freebies to all.

"The states should work to open avenues for employment. If you start giving free food from morning to evening, free cycle, free electricity, then who will work, and what will happen to the work culture," it asked.

Instead of spending on development projects, states focus on 2 things, paying salaries and distributing such largesse, the court said. "Without drawing a distinction between those who can afford and those who cannot, you start distributing? Will it not amount to appeasing policy?" the bench asked TN's counsel.

It wondered why TN firm suddenly decided to loosen purse strings after power tariff was notified. The court has issued notice to the union government and others on the plea of the government power company.

In its plea, TNPDCL challenged a rule of the Electricity Amendment Rules, 2024.

◆ WEATHER ◆

Overview: Dry weather prevailed over Coastal Karnataka, South Interior Karnataka and North Interior Karnataka

Forecast Feb 20: Dry weather likely to prevail over the state.

INTERIOR NORTH			
Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Belagavi	32	16	00
Bidar	31.8	17.5	00
Vijayapura	31.5	15	00
Dharwad	31.8	16.8	00
Haveri	32	16.2	00
Kalaburagi	33.7	20	00
Raichur	32	19	00
COASTAL			
Honnavar	32.3	21.1	00
Karwar	33.4	21.4	00
Shirali	NA	NA	NA
Mangaluru	32.7	23.3	00

INTERIOR SOUTH			
Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Agumbe	NA	NA	NA
Bengaluru	30.2	17.5	00
Ballari	34.1	21	00
Chamarajanagar	NA	NA	NA
Chikkamagaluru	NA	NA	NA
Chitradurga	31.9	17.2	00
Davangere	32.5	15.5	00
Hassan	31.5	12.5	00
Mysuru	32.2	17.4	00
Madikeri	NA	NA	NA
Kolar	30.4	13.4	00
OTHER STATIONS			
New Delhi	21.1	11.4	0.3
Kolkata	30.6	16.6	00
Mumbai	29	20.4	00
Chennai	31.3	22.2	00
Pune	32.7	18.4	00
Hyderabad	30.2	20	00
Th'puram	35.2	24.3	00

Of four resolutions, BJP slams ruling Congress in three

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Karnataka BJP on Thursday passed four resolutions, three of which were critical of the Congress government, while one was appreciative of the NDA government at the Centre.

The BJP came down heavily on the Congress's failure fix Bengaluru's civic problems, its 'inactive and corrupt' governance, and denial of employment and economic opportunities to people from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes communities.

In its first resolution, the BJP took aim at Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, who is also the Bengaluru Development Minister, for 'giving away' the capital city on a silver platter to the real estate mafia. The government was accused of helping the real estate sector by renaming Ramanagara district as Bengaluru South. The proposed tunnel road project between Hebbal and Silk Board Junction, which is estimated to cost Rs 12,690 crore, also came in for criticism.

The second resolution charged the Congress with running a 'useless' government, and cited the Valmiki Corporation scam wherein funds to the tune of Rs 187 crore were misappropriated. The BJP also called out the government on the alleged scams in MUDA and the Excise Department.

In the third resolution, the Congress was accused of misusing money allocated under the Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan (SCP) and Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) Act, in violation of the rules. Incidentally, a sum of Rs 42,018 crore was allocated under the Act in the 2025-26 budget. The fourth resolution saw the BJP congratulating the NDA government for celebrating Vande Mataram, and the introduction of the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin).

'Gandhian socialism, positive secularism guiding BJP'

▸ **BENGALURU, DHNS:** Union Minister of Culture Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on Thursday said that the 'panch nishthas' (five principles) of the BJP, including Gandhian Socialism and positive secularism, were not mere words but 'guiding principles'.

Speaking during the special state executive meeting of the saffron party in Bengaluru, Shekhawat said: "Our panch nishthas -- Nationalism and National Integration, Democracy, positive secularism, establishing Gandhian socialism and positive secularism -- are not just words but guiding principles."

Slamming the Congress, he said: "The state is witnessing incompetent administration. From the beginning, there was infighting for the chief minister's post. It has continued now and is an insult to people's mandate. This is not just an organisational meeting. This is for self-introspection... It's to strengthen the BJP's ideology," he added.

TURTLE OUT OF TURMOIL

A Green Sea Turtle approximately weighing 130 kg that had got entangled among plants in River Kali flowing by the Santhoshi Maa temple in Karwar was rescued on Thursday. Locals, who spotted the turtle and subsequently alerted the authorities, suspect that it got entangled among plants owing to the decreased flow of water in the river. DH PHOTO

Modi pitches for open-source AI

Modi, from Page 1

The prime minister outlined India's 'MANAV' vision for AI. MANAV, the Hindi word for "human". MANAV serves as an acronym representing five core principles: Moral and Ethical System; Accountable Governance; National Sovereignty; Accessible and Inclusive technology; and Valid and Legitimate systems.

"We must give AI the open sky, but keep the command in our own hands. Just like GPS - it suggests the route, but the final decision of direction is ours. The path we choose for AI today will determine the future we create tomorrow," Modi said.

Over 500 global AI leaders, including CEOs of leading tech companies and around 100 government representatives from around the world, including 20 heads of states participated in the event.

Speaking at the summit, French President Emmanuel Macron said the new technologies are increasingly becoming a field of strategic competition. "AI, GPUs and chips are now directly linked to geopolitical and macroeconomic realities," he said. Macron called for collaboration among India, France and other European countries for the development of AI. "The future of AI will be built by those who combine innovation and responsibility, technology with humanity, and India and France will help to shape this future together," Macron added.

Commissions were, are and will be there: Satish Jarkiholi

Commissions, from Page 1

Satish blamed the previous BJP government for the huge pendency of bills. "Works were awarded without adequate budgetary backing. The work has been executed, but payments will take some time. That was the mistake of the previous government. Large dues are pending in the Irrigation and Public Works departments.

Work cannot be stopped. We are working to balance the payments with the available budget," he explained. In his public works department, Satish said bills worth Rs 12,000 crore were pending. "Of this, we've cleared Rs 3,000 crore," he said.

Later, on the sidelines of a public event, Satish reiterated that 'freebies' were "impacting" development in the state. "The state governments, be it Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, or Maharashtra, need to think about it (impact of freebies). We cannot do away with freebies as poor people are availing it. But we should focus on both free schemes and development," he said.

REPAIR & MAINTENANCE SERVICE CONTRACT

E-Tender Notice No. :TRD/LMG/31 of 2025-26; Dated: 13-02-2026; E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work; **Tender No.:** EL-TRD-NFR-LMG-TWAMC-52; **Name of work :** Repair & Maintenance Service Contract for Cummins Engine (B, C & D Checks) and Major Components of 8-Wheeler Tower Wagon in Kamakhya, Chaparmukh, Senchoa and Lumding Depot under Lumding Division for Two (02) Years. **Advertised Value:** ₹2,05,16,166.81/-; **Earnest Money**: ₹2,52,600/-; Date & time of **closing** of tender at **15:00** hrs.on **09-03-2026**. For complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available in the website **www.ireps.gov.in**

Sr. DEE/TRD, Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

EASTERN RAILWAY

BID No. : GEM/2026/B/7249900, Dated : 18.02.2026. Chief Medical Superintendent, Eastern Railway, Kanchrapara Workshop Railway Hospital, Kanchrapara, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal, PIN-743145 invites Open GeM Service tender for the following work: **Name of work :** Mechanized Cleaning, Sweeping, Mopping, Dusting and Rodent Pest control, Sanitation and Disinfection service at Workshop Railway Hospital, Kanchrapara. **Earnest Money Deposit :** ₹ 3,18,419.00. **e-PBG :** 5% of P.O. value. **Estimated value of tender** ₹ 1,59,20,926.04. **Date and time of Opening :** 02.03.2026 at 18.30 hrs. **Period of completion :** 02 (two) year. The GeM service BID documents will be available at GeM site (Government e-Marketplace) i.e. GeM Portal **https://gem.gov.in** and rates are to be quoted online and submitted online through GeM portal i.e. **https://gem.gov.in**

MED-11/2025-26

Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in

Follow us at : @EasternRailway
@easternrailwayheadquarter

IN THE COURT OF THE CITY CIVIL JUDGE AT BANGALORE (CCH-31)
P & SC No. 48 / 2026

Between:
Sri. B.P. DEEPAK S/o Sri. B.V.Prasanna Kumar
Aged about 46 years, R/at No.139/3, Vijay Enclave Apartment, 5th Main Road, Near Vishal Mega Mart Chamarajpet, Bengaluru 560 018.
Aadhar No.5271 1824 4714, Mob: 9008255077
Rep by his GPA Holder;
Sri.S.Jagadish Aged about 74 years, S/o late S.Krishnamachari
Residing at No.76, 3rd Cross, 17th Main, 2nd Block, Koramangala, Bengaluru 560 034. Mob: 8660354196 — Petitioner
And
Nil — Respondent

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, the petitioner above named has made to this Court under Section 372 of the Indian Succession Act for grant of succession certificate in favour of the petitioner in respect of the schedule mentioned below
The below schedule was held by Shwetha Kadalaveni Prakash @ K.P.Shwetha who died on 8-4-2025, who is the wife of the petitioner.
Interested parties are hereby called to appear in this Court in person or by pleader duly instructed on 05th day of march 2026 forenoon to showcase against the petitioners, failing which the appearance will be heard and declared as ex parte.

SCHEDULE

Sl.No	Account No and date	FD Amount	Maturity Value
1	No.29913019314 Dated 7-8-2024	Rs.5,00,000/-	Rs.5,46,985/-
2.	No.29913019315 Dated 7-8-2024	Rs.5,00,000/ -	Rs.5,46,985/-
3.	No.29913019316 Dated 7-8-2024	Rs.5,00,000/-	Rs.5,46,985/-
4	No.29913019317 Dated 7-8-2024	Rs.5,00,000/-	Rs.5,46,985/-
5	29910013049 Dated 5-3-2025	Rs.3,50,000/-	Rs.3,50,000/-
6	29910013030 Dated 5-3-2025	Rs.7,00,000/-	Rs.5,46,985/-

Given under my hand and seal of this court on 10th day of February-2026
By Order of the Court
Asst Registrar,
City Civil Court, Bangalore

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
Chennai Division (Mechanical Branch)
GEM Bid No. GEM / 2026 / B / 7236185 Dated 17.02.2026

Divisional Railway Manager / Mechanical Branch / Chennai Division, Chennai-600 003 for and on behalf of the President of India invites ONLINE tenders for the following work as per tender notice given in the GeM Portal **https://gem.gov.in.** The tenderer (s) / contractor (s) intending to apply for GeM-tender for Mechanical works in Chennai Division, need to get enrolled in the e- tender portal https://gem.gov.in and only online tenders will be accepted.

Description	"Contract for Supply of Skilled Welders for Welding / Gas Cutting Activities in C&W Depot / JTJ Period: 2 Years (Including Sundays & National Holidays)"
Location	**JTJ**
Advertised tender Value in ₹	**₹ 4,08,28,824/-**
Earnest Money Deposit in ₹	**₹ 4,08,300/-**
Similar Nature of Work	**Applicable**
Period of completion in months	**24 months**

Tender closing date and time: 10-03-2026 & 16:00hrs. Details of value of tender, EMD are given in GeM-portal **https://gem.gov.in.** For details bid submission please refer to web portal **https://gem.gov.in.**

Divisional Railway Manager (Mechanical), Chennai Division, Southern Railway, Chennai-600 003

|| कार्यालय, जिला परिषद्, दुमका ||
E-mail- z.pdumka2014@gmail.com

अल्पकालीन ई0–निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या– **ZP-DUM-03/2026/Re-01**
Ref PR. No.370512 (District) 25-26*D

1. कार्य का नाम :– जिला परिषदों को विभिन्न भवनों, परिसम्पत्तियों का निर्माण, मरम्मती एवं नवीकरण मद् अन्तर्गत में प्राप्त आवंटन से ली जानेवाली योजनाओं की निविदा सूची।

क्र0	कार्य का नाम	प्रा0 राशि	अग्रधन की राशि	परिमाण विपत्र का मूल्य	कार्य समाप्ति की अवधि	अभ्युक्ति
1	नेशनल स्कूल के सामने जिला परिषद् की जमीन पर विशाल मार्केट कॉम्पलैक्स का निर्माण।	4,99,00,000.00	9,98,000.00	10000.00	18 माह	

2.	वेबसाइट में निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि	दिनांक :– 27.02.2026
3.	ई–निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय	दिनांक :– 11.03.2026 (अपराह्न 3:00 बजे तक)।
4.	निविदा खुलने की तिथि एवं समय	दिनांक :– 13.03.2026 (समय 2:00 बजे अपराह्न)
5.	निविदा खोलने का स्थान	जिला परिषद् कार्यालय, दुमका।
6.	निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम एवं पता	श्री रबीन कुमार मंडल, जिला अभियंता, जिला परिषद् दुमका।
7.	ई–निविदा प्रकोष्ठ का मोबाईल नंबर	**9308098056**
8.	निविदा शुल्क एवं अग्रधन की राशि केवल ऑन–लाईन मोड द्वारा ही स्वीकार्य होगा।	
9.	निविदा शुल्क एवं अग्रधन की राशि का ई0–भुगतान जिस खाता से किया जायेगा, उसी खाते में अग्रधन की राशि वापस होगी। अगर खाता को बंद कर दिया जाता है तो सारी जवाबदेही आपकी होगी।	

नोट :– उक्त निविदा में जिला परिषद्, दुमका के निबंधित संवेदक ही भाग ले सकते हैं।
निविदा द्वि–लिफाफा पद्धति के माध्यम से किया जायेगा।
बिना कोई कारण बताये निविदा को रद्द करने का अधिकार अधोहस्ताक्षरी के पास सुरक्षित रहेगा।
SBD के सभी शर्त इस ई0–निविदा में लागू रहेंगे।
विस्तृत जानकारी के लिए वेबसाईट www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in एवं कार्यालय के सूचना पट्ट पर देखा जा सकता है।

श्री रबीन कुमार मंडल
जिला अभियंता,
जिला परिषद्, दुमका

PR 373277 District (25-26)_D

केंद्रीय विद्यालय, राष्ट्रीयएमैमानिक प्रयोगशाला परिसर, बेंगलूरु–17
KENDRIYA VIDYALAYA
NAL CAMPUS, BANGALORE - 560 017
(An Autonomous Body under Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)
Tel:080-25211610 Website: https://nal.kvs.ac.in email: kvnal05@gmail.com
KV CODE-1048, CBSE AFFILIATION NO.-800015, UDISE CODE:29200312170

संदर्भ:फा.सं. 13350/केवी (एनएएल)/2025-26/ — दिनांक: 19/02/2026

A Walk-In interview will be conducted on 17/03/2026 at KV NAL Bengaluru to prepare the panel of need based contractual teachers for the session 2026-2027. For details visit Vidyalaya Website **https://nal.kvs.ac.in.**

PRINCIPAL
KV NAL

केंद्रीय विद्यालय डिआरडिओ, सी वी रामन् नगर बेंगलूरु – 560093
KENDRIYA VIDYALAYA DRDO
C V RAMAN NAGAR, BENGALURU-560093
Website: https://drdobangalore.kvs.ac.in/
Email : kvdrdobangalore@gmail.com Phone : 080- 25243919

Ref: KV.DRDO/SF/2025-26/891 — DATED : 17.02.2026

WALK-IN-INTERVIEW FOR CONTRACTUAL TEACHERS - 2026-27

Walk-in-Interview will be conducted in KV. DRDO, C.V. Raman nagar, Bengaluru: 93 for empanelment of teachers on part-time contractual basis for the Academic Year 2026-27 for the posts on the dates given below:

Date of Walk-in-Interview	Category of Posts / Subjects
26.02.2026 (Thursday) 09.00 AM to 02.00 PM	**A) Post Graduate Teachers (PGT)** Hindi / English / Mathematics / Physics / Chemistry / Biology / Computer Science **B) Trained Graduate Teachers (TGT)** Hindi / English / Mathematics / Social Science / Science / Sanskrit **C) Primary Teachers (PRT)** **D) Vocational Skill Coaches** Computer Instructor / Sports & Games Coach / Yoga / Special Educator / Counselor / Craft / Music & Dance / Doctor / Nurse / Kannada

Eligibility, qualifications & remuneration as per KVS norms. Details & Google Form available at: **www.drdobangalore.kvs.ac.in**, ☎: 080-25243919

Candidates must fill the Google Form and attend the interview on the above date with required documents.

Sd/- PRINCIPAL

E-AUCTION FOR THE CONTRACT OF LEASING OF SLRs

E-Auction for the contract of leasing of SLRs for 3 years in trains originating from Lumding Division. **Description:** Parcel Space in SLR Coach (Single Compartment). **Auction Start Date & Time (All Lots) : 11:00** hrs. on **05-03-2026**; **Auction Close Date & Time : 15:40** hrs. on **05-03-2026**. **Rate Unit:** Per Trip Licensing Fee .

Auction Catalogue No.: Lease-LMG-08-26

Seq No.	Lot No./Category	Trips/Days
AA/1	15630-SLR-F1-SHTT-TBM-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	157
AA/2	15616-SLR-F2-SCL-GHY-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	1096
AA/3	12504-SLR-F1-AGTL-SMVB-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	314
AA/4	15418-SLR-R1-SHTT-APDJ-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	470
AA/5	12520-SLR-F1-AGTL-LTT-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	157
AA/6	15641-SLR-F1-SCL-NTSK-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	157
AA/7	15618-SLR-F1-DLCR-GHY-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	470
AA/8	15663-SLR-F1-AGTL-SCL-25-3 (Parcel-SLR)	1096
AA/9	15612-SLR-F1-SCL-RNY-26-1 (Parcel-SLR)	939
AA/10	15626-SLR-F1-AGTL-DGHR-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	157
AA/11	13182-SLR-F1-SHTT-KOAA-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	157
AA/12	20501-SLR-F1-AGTL-ANVT-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	157
AA/13	15817-SLR-F1-SKHV-NHLN-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	1096
AA/14	15616-SLR-R1-SCL-GHY-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	1096
AA/15	15618-SLR-R1-DLCR-GHY-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	470
AA/16	15610-SLR-F1-SANG-GHY-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	1096
AA/17	12502-SLR-F1-AGTL-KOAA-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	157
AA/18	14619-SLR-F1-AGTL-FZR-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	157
AA/19	12516-SLR-F1-SCL-CBE-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	157
AA/20	15418-SLR-F1-SHTT-APDJ-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	470
AA/21	15418-SLR-F2-SHTT-APDJ-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	470
AA/22	15618-SLR-F2-DLCR-GHY-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	470
AA/23	13176-SLR-F1-SCL-SDAH-25-3 (Parcel-SLR)	470
AA/24	15616-SLR-F1-SCL-GHY-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	1096
AA/25	12508-SLR-F1-SCL-TVC-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	157
AA/26	20507-SLR-F1-SANG-ANVT-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	157

Prospective bidders are requested to visit e-Auction leasing Module of IREPS website **www.ireps.gov.in.**

Divisional Railway Manager (C), Lumding
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Contractors plan protest on budget day over pending bills

'All works will be stopped from April if dues are not cleared'

HUBBALLI, DHNS

When Chief Minister Siddaramaiah presents the state budget for the record 17th time on March 6, contractors across the state have planned to stop government works being executed by them for a day and stage a symbolic protest at Freedom Park in Bengaluru, demanding the release of over Rs 37,000 crore pending bills from the government.

Deciding to go on a one-day protest, the Karnataka State Contractors' Association has urged the chief minister to convene an official meeting and make an announcement to pay the contractors' bills pending for three years.

"Our memoranda have not received a satisfactory response, and the financial condition of contractors is very poor due to non-payment of bills. Therefore, staging a protest has become inevitable. If the bills are not cleared, all the works would be stopped indefinitely from April," the association president R Manjunath said.

Among the pending contractors' bills, Rs 13,000 crore is from major irrigation department, Rs 8,000 crore is from public works department, Rs 3,800 crore from rural development and panchayat raj department, Rs 3,000 crore is from minor irrigation department, Rs 2,600 crore from housing and wakf department, Rs 2,000 crore from urban development department, Rs 2,000 from labour department, and Rs 1,600 crore from BBMP, he told reporters in the city on Thursday.

"The association's fight during the previous government, when Kempanna was the president, helped a little for the present government to come to power. Siddaramaiah had assured to stop the package tender and commission menace. But those are still going on. Match-fixing is going on in the Cabinet to approve package tenders, especially related to urban development and labour departments, and contractors from other states are bagging tenders," Manjunath charged.

Small and medium contractors affected

Giving works to Nirmiti Kendra and the land army is also badly affecting small and medium contractors, he said.

Some departments do not follow the seniority list to pay contractors' bills, but only powerful contractors are getting their bills cleared.

In states like Kerala, there is a system of making payments immediately after six months, Manjunath said, adding that the pending contractors' bills in Dharwad district alone are around Rs 1,400 crore.

He also held a meeting with the office-bearers of the Dharwad District Contractors' Association, as a preparation for the protest.

M S Sankagoudashani, Suresh Bhumaraddi, B C Dinesh, and others were present.

'Commission business'

Charging that urban development, housing and wakf departments are being run through mediators, Karnataka State Contractors' Association president R Manjunath alleged that 'commission business' is also going on to get the contractors' bills paid by several departments, though the commission has reduced in some departments.

"Several MLAs and other elected representatives delay the bhumi puja to initiate works until we 'meet' them, and this delays the works," he said, indicating that some MLAs expect commission before performing puja for the works.

Lingayat, Ganiga not mutually exclusive identities, says High Court

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Karnataka High Court has held that a person described as 'Lingayat' in ancestral records may, upon proof, establish Ganiga identity within that fold.

"Lingayat and Ganiga are not mutually exclusive identities. Ganiga may subsist as a distinct caste group within the broader Lingayat fold," Justice Suraj Govindaraj said while dismissing the petition filed by a police constable challenging the selection and appointment of another constable as police sub-inspector.

The petitioner alleged a false claim of Lingayat Ganiga (Category 2A) status, citing family records showing "Hindu Lingayat," while the respondent produced birth, school, and transfer certificates listing "Ganiga."

The court observed that statutory authorities had relied on relevant records and caste certificates, and their conclusion was supported by evidence.

It cited precedents, including Prabhushankar K V *vs* Selection Committee for Medical Colleges and M V Chandrakanth *vs* Sangappa, reiterating that describing someone as Lingayat does not negate a Ganiga claim.

VIT VP honoured with honorary doctorate from Rajamangala University

(Left to right) Dr Sravan Krishna, Kadhambari S Viswanathan, Dr G Viswanathan, Dr Sankar Viswanathan and Ramani Balasundaram at the event.

The vice president of Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT), Dr Sankar Viswanathan, received an honorary degree - Doctor of Philosophy in Engineering and Technology Management - from the Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep (RMUTK), Thailand.

The doctoral degree was awarded with a unanimous approval from the university council, in recognition of his exceptional leadership, professional achievements and significant contributions to the advancement of engineering and technology. Palakorn Suwanrath, Privy Council of Thailand and Dr Pichai Janmanee, President, RMUTK, felicitated Dr Viswanathan.

The honorary doctoral degree is the highest level of academic recognition bestowed by the institution for distinguished service and professional excellence. In his acceptance address, Dr Viswanathan acknowledged the shared culture and knowledge systems of India and Thailand, and called for more active academic collaboration between the two countries.

VIT's chancellor Dr G Viswanathan, trustee Ramani Balasundaram and assistant vice president Kadhambari S Viswanathan, along with radiologist Dr Sravan Krishna, attended the ceremony.

Curated by DH Brandspot

Plan panel for rehaul of education, nutrition schemes

BENGALURU, DHNS

Despite spending crores of rupees on food and nutrition schemes, the nutritional status of women and children remains poor, with rising anaemia and lifestyle disorders, the Karnataka State Policy and Planning Commission has observed in a report submitted on Thursday for consideration in the budget.

The report, based on recommendations from five sub-committees covering education, agriculture, labour, women and child development, and environment, said schemes like midday meals, Matrupoorna, Annapurna, Ksheera Bhagya and Anna Bhagya had not adequately improved nutrition outcomes.

"Anganwadis are the mainstay of the supplementary food distribution system for children, pregnant and lactating women. But the prevalence of anaemia among children and women is high, especially in districts like Yadgir, Raichur and Kalaburagi," said commission vice-chairman B R Patil, adding that locally prepared fresh and nutritious meals using locally sourced rice and pulses should replace packaged food to address the issue.

In the education sector, the report said the Right to Education framework had been neglected and recommended expanding its coverage to include children aged 3 to 16 years.

It called for reviving the free bicycle scheme for girls to improve mobility and strengthen secondary education in rural areas, along with adopting AI-based digital technology to improve the quality of school education.

The growing influence of social media on youth has led to rising sexual harassment cases and depression, making sex education, gender equality programmes, and mental health awareness in schools necessary.

In higher education, traditional graduation programmes may soon become redundant and futuristic courses aligned with emerging job markets are needed, the report said.

It called for a task force to review the credentials of teaching faculty and recruitment to be put on hold till the review is completed. The panel sought enhanced research funding, including a state research fund of Rs 100 crore to promote quality research and global competitiveness.

SCSP-TSP funds issue

The commission has cautioned the government against weakening statutory safeguards and allowing flexibility in the utilisation of Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) and Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) funds, saying it could dilute the purpose and deepen inequality.

Flagging concerns over diversion and under-utilisation of funds delaying key interventions in education, nutrition, livelihood and welfare sectors, the panel reminded that the objective was to bridge historical socio-economic gaps.

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3 more new crest gates installed at TB dam

HOSAPETE (VIJAYANAGARA DISTRICT), DHNS: Three more new crest gates have been installed at the Tungabhadra Dam. With this, a total of eight crest gates have been installed so far, sources in the Tungabhadra Board said.

They said crest gates have now been installed at gate numbers 1, 17 and 28. Earlier, gates were installed at numbers 18, 19, 20, 32 and 33. Lifting and lowering trials have also been conducted at gate number 18. An officer said that 13 crest gates will be installed by the end of this month. Iinstallation work is currently in progress at gate numbers 4, 11, 24, 26 and 27. Meanwhile, old gates are being cut at gate numbers 5, 21, 25 and 31.

TEMPLE VISIT

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, who is in charge of the Assam Legislative Assembly election, visits the famed Kamakhya temple in Guwahati with Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi on Thursday.

Mysuru DC bans usage of helium to fill balloons

MYSURU, DHNS: Deputy Commissioner G Lakshmikanth Reddy has passed an order prohibiting the usage of helium gas to fill balloons in Mysuru district, in view of the protection of public peace and safety.

Following the recent helium cylinder blast incident, where helium gas was used to fill balloons by a vendor near Jayamarthanda Gate of the Mysuru Palace, which resulted in three deaths and injuries to a few people, the deputy commissioner has passed this order, exercising his power under Section 152 of BNS, 2023.

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I, CHETHAN JAYANTHA, S/o JAYANTHA, r/a, # 1206, 2nd A Main, 7th Block, BSK 3rd Stage, 2nd Phase, Hosakerehalli, Bangalore 560085, hereby declare that both the names CHETHAN J and CHETHAN JAYANTHA refers to me only. Vide Affidavit dated 19/02/2026 before the Notary T. Venkategowda, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, DASHNI SAINATH BHONSLE W/o. Sainath Bhonsle, residing at. House no 8,Lakeview garden layout.K channasandra, Bangalore 560043, Have Changed my Name to **DASHMI SAINATH BHONSLE** vide affidavit Dated 19.02.2026 sworn before Notary R. Jyshree, Bangalore Rural Dist.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **GEETHA JAIN** and **GEETHA,** W/o Rakesh Kumar Jain, R/at # 1002, Svasa Homes 10th Floor, Tower-1 Block Bhava, 5th Main Road Svasa Homes K G Nagar Bengaluru-560019, declare that the above names pertain to me only & henceforth I shall be known as **GEETHA JAIN** vide affidavit dated 19-02-2026 before notary L Gopalakrishna, Bengaluru.

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I, **SANTHOSHA B N,** residing at No.6, 2nd A Cross, Eshwari Nagar, Hosakerehalli, Bengaluru - 560085, have changed my name to **SANTHOSH B N** vide affidavit dated 16-02-2026 before notary K.V. Bachi Reddy, Bengaluru. Henceforth I shall be known as **SANTHOSH B N** only

WE, PUNIT DASHOTTAR and SHWETA DASHOTTAR resident at D410 Nandini Citadel Noble Residence, Chandrashekarpura, Akshayanagar, Bengaluru-560076 has changed our Minor Son's name from SOURISH DASHOTTAR to SOURISH PUNIT DASHOTTAR vide affidavit dated 18/02/2026 sworn before notary Jalandhara, Bengaluru

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PM Modi backs Macron's call to curb social media use by children

French prez slams networks for claiming they backed free speech

AJITH ATHRADY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

French President Emmanuel Macron on Thursday called on India to work with France to make the internet and social media a safe space for children, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi echoing it during his address at the India AI Impact Summit 2026.

"Our platforms, governments, and regulators should be working together to make the internet and social media a safe space. This is why, in France, we are embarking on a process to ban social networks for children under 15 years old," said Macron while delivering the keynote address on Day 4 of the summit.

"We are committed in this journey with several European countries present here today, (including) Greece and Spain. I know, Mr Prime Minister, you will join this club. This is great news that India will join such an approach in order to protect children and teenagers. We stand ready to take all necessary actions to ensure that our young citizens are truly safe," he said, referring to Modi.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with French President Emmanuel Macron during the India AI Impact Summit. PTI

"One of our priorities during the G-7 presidency will be children's protection against AI and digital-related abuse," he said. France holds the presidency of the G-7 in 2026.

Stressing the importance of child safety, Modi said in his address: "We must become even more vigilant about children's safety. Just as a school syllabus is carefully curated, the AI space too must be child-safe and family-guided."

Other issues

Macron further said that in the face of increasing geopolitical tensions, there was a growing sense of urgency to direct all digital tools towards an inclusive approach, and that India and France would jointly work to build a framework for AI by combining innovation with responsibility and technology with humanity.

He said France and India shared a common vision for developing a "sovereign AI" to protect the planet and foster prosperity for all.

Macron also criticised social-media companies and their technology executives, saying they falsely presented themselves as champions of free speech.

Workshop on ASIC design

In a significant step towards strengthening India's semiconductor design ecosystem, the Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering, Cambridge Institute of Technology (CIT), Bengaluru, is organising a five-day intensive hands-on workshop 'ASIC Design Flow Using SCL 180nm Technology' between February 23 and 27, 2026.

The workshop is being held under the Chips to Startup (C2S) Initiative, an ambitious programme of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India.

The primary objective of the workshop is to provide participants with end-to-end exposure to the complete digital ASIC design flow, taking a design from HDL coding to fabrication-ready GDSII generation using SCL 180nm process technology. Unlike theory-oriented programmes, the workshop emphasises practical, tool-driven learning aligned with industry workflows.

A central feature of the programme is a detailed case study on a Dual 8-Point FFT Processor with bus interfaces. Participants will work through RTL design and verification, FPGA prototyping, logic synthesis, physical design, and sign-off checks, gaining insight into both datapath-intensive and control-oriented digital systems. The case study is designed to simulate real-world ASIC development, culminating in tape-out readiness.

Workshop curriculum:

- Verilog RTL design and functional verification
- Logic synthesis with timing, power and area analysis
- Floor planning, placement, clock tree synthesis and routing
- Physical verification including DRC and LVS
- Post-layout analysis and GDSII generation

Participants will use industry-standard EDA tools from Cadence, Synopsys and Siemens, with an additional session introducing an open-source ASIC flow using OpenLane. The programme is open to faculty members, research scholars, post-graduate students and final-year under-graduate students with prior exposure to digital electronics, VLSI fundamentals and Verilog HDL.

The workshop will be conducted by experts from semiconductor industries, CDAC and internal experts. It will be coordinated by senior faculty members and research leaders at CIT, with institutional support from the Cambridge Group of Institutions.

The programme is intended to address the industry-wide shortage of engineers trained in complete ASIC design flows.

Curated by DH Brandspot

An elderly internally displaced person (IDP) gets emotional during an interaction with Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand (unseen) at the Alternate Housing Complex, Langol in Imphal, on Thursday. PTI

Manipur CM, Kuki MLAs talk virtually to displaced persons

GUWAHATI, DHNS: With Kuki organisations remaining firm on not allowing the Meiteis to enter Kuki-dominated areas, Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh, his deputy Nemcha Kipgen, and three other Kuki MLAs on Thursday interacted virtually with displaced Kukis from a relief camp of displaced Meiteis in Imphal West.

The CM took stock of the relief-camp inmates' sufferings and assured that he was trying to bridge the gap between the two communities to ensure free movement in each other's areas.

Singh also disbursed financial assistance amounting to Rs 33 crore for those living in relief camps since the Meitei-Kuki conflict erupted in May 2023.

A statement issued by the CM's Office said that although some displaced persons returned home, challenges remained as fear continued among sections of people.

"Lasting peace will come only when communities reach a mutual understanding. I appeal to the civil-society organisations from both the Hills and the Valley to work together for the restoration of normalcy," said the statement.

Since taking charge as the new chief minister on February 4, Singh, a Meitei, has been trying to reach out to both communities for the restoration of peace and free movement. However, Kuki organisations like the Kuki-Zo Council have made it clear that they would not allow the entry of Meiteis in their areas till a "political settlement" was reached by forming a Union Territory comprising Kuki-inhabited areas in Manipur.

Meiteis and Kukis have been avoiding travel to each other's territories since May 2023, fearing fresh conflict.

Shillong MP dies of cardiac arrest while playing football

GUWAHATI, DHNS: Lok Sabha Member from Shillong, Meghalaya, Ricky A J Syngkon died reportedly after suffering a cardiac arrest while playing football on Thursday evening.

Syngkon, 54, who defeated Vincent Pala of Congress in 2024 Lok Sabha polls, breathed his last at 8.45 pm, officials of his party, Voice of People Party, said.

According to reports, Syngkon had gone to play football with friends on Thursday evening at a playground in Mawlai Mawiong area, where he collapsed. He was rushed by his friends to Mawiong Community Health Centre for medical attention. He was later taken to Dr H Gordon Roberts Hospital in Jaiaw, where he died.

Syngkon was a strong voice in the Opposition in Meghalaya.

Meghalaya Chief Minister, Comrad K Sangma, condoled Syngkon's sudden death. "Ricky was a dedicated and compassionate leader, with deep enthusiasm for public service and unwavering commitment to his people. He was rooted in faith and served with humility, vision, and a sincere desire to uplift society," Sangma posted on X.

5,000 km, 9 rallies: BJP plans Bengal poll blitz

AMRITA MADHUKALYA
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Ahead of the West Bengal Assembly elections, the BJP is planning a series of rallies across key districts. The decision was taken at a recent meeting of party leaders, with rallies likely to cover areas such as Siliguri, North 24 Parganas, Malda, Howrah and Hooghly. In all, nine rallies are planned, spanning nearly 5,000 km.

MEGA OUTREACH

- Paribartan Yatra to reach all Assembly segments
- Party divides state into five belts for targeted campaign strategy
- 60 large meetings and 300 smaller interactions scheduled
- Finale at Brigade Parade Ground with PM Modi likely to address supporters

The outreach drive, branded as the 'BJP Paribartan Yatra', was cleared at a strategy session this week as part of the party's roadmap for the 2026 Assembly elections. The preparatory meeting was attended by senior figures, including Union Minister Bhupender Yadav, BJP organisational observer Sunil Bansal and former Tripura chief minister Biplab Deb. Discussions focused on the prevailing political climate, strengthening booth-level networks and shaping the party's manifesto.

Leaders mapped out routes across Siliguri, Malda, the Kolkata Metropolitan region, North and South 24 Parganas, Nabadwip, Howrah-Hooghly, Medinipur, Purulia and Burdwan. The state has been divided into five focus belts: Radha Bengal, North Bengal, the Nabadwip area, Kolkata and the Howrah-Hooghly-Medinipur stretch.

State BJP president Shamik Bhattacharya said the initiative will be rolled out in phases. "On March 1, the rally will start from Cooch Behar South, Krishnanagar South, Kulti, Garbeta and Raydighi. The following day, similar programmes will begin in Islampur, Sandeshkhali, Hassan and Amta," he said.

Bhattacharya said that activities will pause on March 3 and 4 because of Holi. Between March 5 and 10, the organisers intend to travel across 5,000 kilometres.

The plan is to reach all Assembly segments in the state. Around 60 large-scale meetings and nearly 300 smaller interactions have been scheduled.

India likely to join US-led strategic alliance 'Pax Silica'

NEW DELHI, PTI: India is likely to formally join a US-led strategic alliance, known as 'Pax Silica', which is aimed at building a resilient supply chain for critical minerals and artificial intelligence.

The move comes amid efforts by the two sides to finalise the proposed trade deal and move forward on several other initiatives to solidify the bilateral ties after a spell of severe strain in the relations.

India is likely to formally join the 'Pax Silica' initiative on Friday, people familiar with the matter said.

The initiative was launched in December to build a secure, resilient, and innovation-driven supply chain for critical minerals and artificial intelligence.

The Pax Silica Summit was held in Washington on December 12, where partner nations signed the Pax Silica declaration.

The declaration lays out a shared vision of deep economic and technology cooperation across supply chains—from raw materials through semiconductors and AI infrastructure—and commitment to mutual prosperity, security.

The member nations of the Pax Silica include Australia, Greece, Israel, Japan, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom.

US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor last month announced an invitation to New Delhi to join the strategic alliance.

One of the key pillars of Pax Silica was to establish a durable economic order to drive AI-powered prosperity across partner nations.

"We recognise that a reliable supply chain is indispensable to our mutual economic security," according to the Pax Silica declaration..

Chhattisgarh community bars engaged couples from talking to each other till wedding

BALOD, PTI: A community in Chhattisgarh's Balod district has banned engaged couples from speaking to each other privately on the phone till the wedding, citing an increase in relationship break-ups.

The Sen community, which falls under the Other Backward Class category, has a population of approximately 250,000 across the state. About 70% of community works in salons.

Santosh Kaushik, the community's Balod district president, said they observed that many couples were parting ways after engagement, causing distress for both parties.

"We discovered that the reason behind this was the communication between the boy and the girl via mobile phone before marriage. Therefore, we have made a rule that there should be no communication between the boy and the girl after the engagement and before the marriage," he said.

If necessary, the conversation should take place in front of the parents, he said.

Gauri Shankar Shrivas, the state organisation secretary of the community, welcomed the decision by their Balod district unit. "The ban has been imposed in Balod district and will soon be implemented across the state. Previously, the community had also banned pre-wedding shoots," he said.

The younger generation is divided over the idea.

Balod resident Sakshi (20) welcomed the move, saying if mobile phones are breaking engagements, it's not right for couples to talk for hours before the wedding.

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Tender Notification (Through KPPP mode only)

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The bids will be received through electronic tendering mode only. The detailed notification regarding above said enquiry in the KPPP process can be obtained by logging on to website **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** with hyperlink "**E Procurement KPTCL"** or **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** on or after **21.02.2026**. Any other details can be had from the Office of the undersigned during office hours.

Sd/- Chief Engineer (Elect.), Transmission (Operation) Zone, KPTCL, Prasarana Bhavana, F.T.S. compound, N.R. Mohalla, Mysuru-570007.

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No. BMCRC/SUP/TEND/Miscellaneous/11/2025-26/492 DATE:17.02.2026

e-TENDER NOTIFICATION

Tenderis invited from theeligible Bidders for Supply of Miscellaneousto Medical College Hospital, BMCRC, Ballarion Rate Contract for a period of **One year** under Two bid system through e-procurement portal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.inof Government of Karnataka as per the KTPP Act-1999-2000. The interested Bidders are informed to submit the proposal in priscribed format in above said e-portal on are before **03.03.2026 @5.00PM.** The total approximate cost of tender is **Rs.59.15Lakhs** Further details may be obtained in the above said website and **www.bmcrcballari.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sd/- Dean & Director, BMCRC, Ballari
DIPR/Ballari/1025/KSMCA/2025-26

☎ :08356-298933
TOWN PANCHAYAT BABALESHWAR
Dist : Vijayapur) (State: Karnataka
www.babaleshwarltown.gov.in Email: itstaff_ulb_babaleshwar@yahoo.co.in
No:T.P.BBl/Amruth-2.00/E-tender.Noti/2025-26 Date:16-02-2026

(Through K.P.P.P E-Portal Only)

Chief Office Town Panchayat Babaleshwar, District Vijayapur, Invites Bids through K.P.P.P E-Portal Only For The Below Said indnent numbers development Works Under Town Panchayat Limit, 2025-26 Amruth-2.00 Scheme Hence From The Eligible Bidders Cann Apply For The Said Works As per The Below Time Schedule.
1) DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT55132
2) DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT55097
3) DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT55123
4) DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT55126
Note:- For More information can go Through the K.P.P.P Website http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in and download the Tender Documents And Submit through E-Portal Only Within the Stipulated time Schedule.
1) Last date to Receipt The tender through K.P.P.P Portal : 19-03-2026 At 5-30PM.
2) Date And Time of opening of technical Bid : 21-03-2026 At 4:30 P.M.
3) Date And Time of opening Of Financial Bid : 30-03-2026 At 4:30 P.M.
For More Information Contact the Technical Section at Town Panchayat Babaleshwar or through oficial website : http:// eproc.karnataka.gov.in.

Sd/- Chief Officer, T.P Babaleshwar
Sd/- Administrator, T.P Babaleshwar

BENGALURU CENTRAL CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Assistant Director, BCCC, 4th Floor, Annex-3, Narasimharaja Sqaure Bengaluru -02
No: AD(AH)/BCCC/PR-108/2025-26 Dated:18-02-2026

Tender Notification

Bengaluru Central City Corporation Invites Expression of Interest from Eligible Bidders for Tender for The Supply Of Combined Vaccine (5 in 1) For Stray Dogs in BCCC

1.	Tender Reference No: BCCC/2025-26/IND0002
2.	Pre-Bid Meeting Date and Time : **23-02-2026, 12:30** pm at the following venue: office of AD, BCCC, Annex 3, 4th floor, N.R.Sqaure, Bengaluru-560002
3.	Last date & Time for submission of Queries in Karnataka public procurement portal up to **23-02-2026, 5:00pm**
4.	Last date & Time for submission of Tender in Karnataka public procurement portal on **04-03-2026, 5:00pm**
5.	Date & Time of opening of the technical bid in Karnataka public procurement portal on **05-03-2026, 5:10 pm**
6.	EMD Amount :As per Schedule of requirement
7.	Address for Communication: Assistant Director (Animal Husbandry), Annex-3, 4th floor, N.R.Square, Bangalore-02.Phone: 99002 29973 Email: adahbccc@gmail.com

1. Tender Documents may be downloaded from the website **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**
2. Other details can be seen in the tender documents.

Sd/-
Assistant Director (Head Animal Husbandry)

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
ಜಿಲ್ಲಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ, ಉತ್ತರ ಕನ್ನಡ, ಕಾರವಾರ–581301
ದೂ: 08382–226406, 226471 ಫ್ಯಾಕ್ಸ್: 08382–226603
Email: dckarwar@gmail.com Website: http://uttarakannada.nic.in
No: DCUK/Census/Cr-01/2025-26 Date: 19-02-2026

ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಜನಗಣತಿ 2027ಕ್ಕೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದಂತೆ ಉತ್ತರ ಕನ್ನಡ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಮಟ್ಟದಲ್ಲಿ, ತಾಲೂಕ ಚಾರ್ಜ ಆಫಿಸರ್ ಹಾಗೂ ನಗರ ಚಾರ್ಜ ಆಫಿಸರ್‌ಗಳಿಗೆ **26 - Technical Assistant** ಮತ್ತು **01- Multi Tasking Staff** ಹೊರಗುತ್ತಿಗೆ ಆಧಾರದ ಮೇಲೆ ಪಡೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ.

Tender Document for procurement of Technical Assistant and Multi-Tasking Staff for Census of India 2027 in Uttara Kannada District
(1) Tender Reference No: DCUK/Census/Cr-06/2025-26 (2) Commencement of issue of Bid document through KPPP Portal of Government of Karnataka: 18-02-2026 16:00 hrs (3) Last date and time for uploading of tender in e-Procurement platform: 25-02-2026 17:00 hrs (4) Time and date of opening of tenders: Technical Bid: 26-02-2026 17:30 hrs (5) Time and date of opening of tenders: Commercial Bid: 27-02-2026 11:00 hrs.

Sd/-, District Census Officer & Add Deputy Commissioner Uttar Kannada, Karwar
DIPR/KWR/KSMCA/1120/25-26 Dt. 19.02.2026

KARNATAKA POWER CORPORATION LIMITED
(RAICHUR THERMAL POWER STATION)
CIN : U85110KA1970SGC001919
No.: EEP/e-tender Date: 11.02.2026

ABSTRACT BID NOTIFICATION (Through KPP Portal Only)

Tenders are invited through KPP Portal: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in under "GOODS" category on 09.02.2026 & 11.02.2026** as per RTPS requirements. Procurement of **1. KPCL/2025-26/IND2352/CALL-2,** Sulphuric Acid. EMD: **Rs. 1,75,000/-. 2. KPCL/2025-26/IND2248/CALL-3,** Strong Acid cation resin. EMD: **Rs. 12,000/-. 3. KPCL/2025-26/IND2351/CALL-2,** Worm gear & shaft of mill gearbox of Unit 3 & 4 of RTPS. EMD: **Rs. 1,08,000/-. 4. KPCL/2025-26/IND1814/CALL-2,** Dewatering Pump 5 HP. EMD: **Rs. 3,300/-. 5. KPCL/2025-26/IND2411,** 500mm width conveyor belt for mill maintenance of RTPS. EMD: **Rs. 9,000/-.** Last date & time for receipt of tenders: For Sl. No. 3: **23.02.2026,16:00Hrs.** For Sl. No. 4 & 5: **25.02.2026,16:00Hrs.** and For Sl. No. 1 & 2: **26.02.2026,16:00Hrs.** Further details can be had from the office of the **Executive Engineer (Purchase),** Mobile: **94495 97966,** e-mail: **eeprtps@gmail.com,**

E-TENDER NOTIFICATION

1. KPCL/2025-26/EL/WORK_INDENT3805/CALL-4, Dated: 16.02.2026, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of electrical switch mechanism of important valves of Unit -5 to 8 of RTPS. EMD: **Rs. 40,102/-** Last date for submission of bid(both cover 1 & 2) : **24.02.2026 upto 16:30Hrs.** Further details can be had from the office of the **Executive Engineer (LT-2), RTPS, KPCL, Shaktinagar - 584170, Raichur District,** Mobile: **94495 96531,** e-mail: **eelt2rtps@gmail.com,** Website: **https://kpcl.karnataka.gov.in.**

सीएसआईआर - **राष्ट्रीय वांतरिक्ष प्रयोगशालाएं**
Council of Scientific and Industrial Research
NATIONAL AEROSPACE LABORATORIES
पी बी सं. 1779, एचएएल एयरपोर्ट रोड, कोडिहल्ली, बेंगलूरु – 560 017
P B No. 1779, HAL Airport Road, Kodihalli, Bengaluru - 560017. India
ISO:9001:2015 Certified

Advertisement for Walk in Interview

CSIR–NAL, Bengaluru is a premier R&D laboratory, calling for walk in interview for temporary engagement under projects and Apprenticeship trainee as per details below:
Project Staffs- 05 Posts: Advt. No. 05/2026/PS
ITI Apprenticeship Trainee- 28 Posts: Advt. No 06/2026/APP

For complete details of advertisement and walk-in-interview schedule, please visit **www.nal.res.in.**

Sd/-
Sr. Controller of Administration

KARNATAKA STATE MINERALS CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
Regd. Office : TTMC 'A' Block 5th Floor, BMTC Building, KH Road, Shanthinagar, Bengaluru-560027.
Phone: 080-22278813/14/15/16, Fax : 080-22213172
Website: https://ksmc.karnataka.gov.in
No.151/KSMCL/MECH/KMM,SIOM,TIOM/W-Tanker/2025-26/3167 Date: 19.02.2026

e-TENDER INVITATION

KSMCL Invites E-tender for Purchase of Hydrolic Excavator (min 75 HP) to Subbrayanahalli Iron Ore Mines Sandur, Sandur Tq, Bellari Dist, Karnataka

CALENDER OF EVENTS

Commencement to Download from website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in	19.02.2026
Last date for receiving the queries through e-procurement portal	21.02.2026 up to 5:00 pm
Last date and Time for uploading e-tender in E-Procurement platform on or before	05.03.2026 up to 5:00 pm
The Technical bid will be opened online by the Authorized officers on	07.03.2026 At 11:00 am
Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	Rs.1,20,000/-.

Tender documents may be downloaded from e-procurement GOK Platform website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in Contact for any support in uploading & registration, E-procurement Helpdesk: 080-46010000/ 68948777.

Sd/-
General Manager (A&V)
DIPR/CP/5749/AKAR/2025-26

DECCAN HERALD
ESTABLISHED 1948

India, France deepen time-tested ties

India and France have reaffirmed the depth and spread of their relationship with a series of measures announced after the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron in Mumbai. The two countries have longstanding ties and a strategic partnership that has remained stable even in times when they adopted divergent positions on external issues. It has often been noted that France was the only major power, besides Russia, which refused to criticise India's nuclear tests in 1998. This has also been a relationship with historical and cultural dimensions, and both countries have tried to keep their ties unaffected by changes in governments and shifts in global politics. Modi and Macron have built on this foundation.

With Tata Advanced Systems Limited setting up the final assembly line of the Airbus H125 light utility helicopter, in Vemagal in Kolar district of Karnataka, and an MoU signed for manufacturing HAMMER missiles in India, the defence cooperation has seen an upgrade. Last week, India's Ministry of Defence cleared a plan to buy 114 Rafale jets from France in a Rs 3.25 lakh crore deal. A purchase of 26 Rafale Marine aircraft was contracted for the Indian Navy in 2025. Both countries have renewed a 10-year defence cooperation agreement. France is now India's second-largest defence partner after Russia. The two countries have agreed to enhance their coordination in the exploration for critical and rare earth minerals. The framework for co-operation includes other areas such as biotechnology and advanced materials. Cooperation in scientific and technological enterprises, startups, health, and skilling has been formalised.

The countries formalise multi-domain cooperation, signalling strategic convergence amid global churn

Macron was also a participant at the India AI Impact Summit in New Delhi. The French President's visit marks the commitment of both countries to continuing and broadening their relationship. This is an important turn against the backdrop of the ongoing global churn triggered by the policies of United States President Donald Trump. Even while being a part of the European Union (EU), France has tried to assert its independence in its engagement with other countries. Stable bilateral relationships are the order of the day at a time when countries are grappling with the uncertainties in trade and other domains. It is significant that this was Macron's fourth visit to India and that Modi has announced an elevation of the bilateral ties to the level of a Special Global Strategic Partnership. The strengthening of the relationship is also likely to complement ties envisioned in the recently signed India-EU trade deal.

Bellahalli flags unlearned lessons

Bengaluru's garbage crisis has once again spilled beyond city limits, this time onto the narrow village roads leading to the landfill in Bellahalli. For two days, over 150 garbage trucks were stopped by protesting villagers, triggering warnings of waste piling up in parts of the city. The protest has been called off after official assurances that the villagers' grievances would be addressed. The blockade was treated as the disruption of an essential service, but it is, in fact, the symptom of a deeper civic failure. Bellahalli is a critical dumping site that receives waste from the northern and eastern parts of Bengaluru. Villagers living around the landfill site say they have reached the breaking point. The immediate provocation was the death of a child in a road accident. The protest, however, was not against waste dumping *per se*, but against years of neglect, broken assurances, and the steady erosion of health and dignity that comes with hosting the city's garbage. Residents complain that funds meant for roads, drinking water, schools, and health facilities have been stuck in bureaucratic limbo for nearly two years.

Villages near Bellahalli, like those earlier affected by the now-closed Mandur landfill, live with toxic air from the decomposing mixed waste, garbage fires, contaminated groundwater, and the threat of respiratory illnesses and infections. While farmers report a decline in soil fertility, constant truck traffic has destroyed internal roads in the area. Coercing the villagers into compliance risks deepening the mistrust. Far from holding the city to ransom, the villagers are asking why they alone must absorb the consequences of urban mismanagement. With the Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML) assuring the release of funds for development works in areas around the landfill site, the standoff may have eased. A holistic, long-term solution, however, appears distant, as the administration continues to undermine the potential of decentralised waste management and endorse expansive landfills.

The standoff is over, but only decentralised, accountable waste management can provide real solutions

Landfills are not an inevitability. The Solid Waste Management Rules 2026, which come into force in April, provide a roadmap: four-stream segregation for wet, dry, sanitary, and toxic waste; hologram tracking for trucks to prevent unauthorised dumping; and on-site processing for bulk generators. In addition, decentralised ward-level composting can reduce landfill dependence. While these solutions are well known, implementation remains the missing link. Releasing promised funds may defuse the ongoing tension. But unless the city fixes how it generates, segregates, and processes its waste, Bellahalli will follow Mandur not as a lesson learnt, but as a warning ignored.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

India's reset with Dhaka is fraught with caveats

Bangladesh's vote for continuity places India on a diplomatic tightrope and may feed divisive political narratives in poll-bound states

M K BHADRAKUMAR

India's response to the results of the Bangladesh election has been cautious. An inchoate tone of hope is on display, laced with unease. Voters chose to back pro-establishment, conservative parties, rather than the young people, making up a majority of the population, who had taken centre stage. The energy radiating from the 'Gen Z' clamouring for reform faced institutional scepticism and political hurdles. Even the United States lost interest.

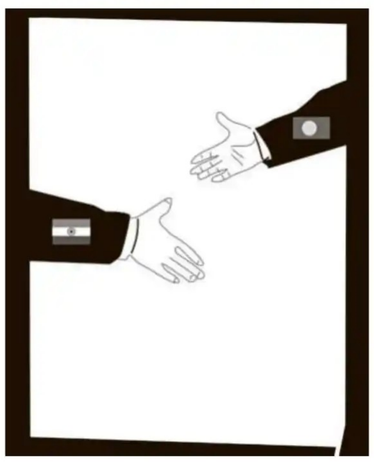
It signals that overcoming internal hurdles and translating initial protest demands into policy change could prove challenging. The youth parties had a thin grassroots presence compared to the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the cadre-based Jamaat-e-Islami, and suffered from a lack of funding and institutional capacity; they failed to present a unified front and distinguish themselves from established political entities.

The election result reflects an extremely complex matrix of continuity rather than change. This may not be sustainable for long, because the State in Bangladesh is partially in collapse and corruption is a huge problem; and 56 million, 44% of the electorate, are aged between 18 and 37 years. The exclusion of Awami League further complicates matters, although the February 12 election has been Bangladesh's first truly competitive vote in years. These are pointers to the trajectory of a nation in flux.

Meanwhile, a potentially divisive issue has sailed into view – the rushed trade deal with the US, negotiated in secrecy and signed by Muhammad Yunus' interim government on February 9. It poses the first crucial challenge to the pivotal role the incoming BNP government has ascribed to its election slogan 'Bangladesh First'. Critics flag that Bangladesh's economic sovereignty and place in the global order are at risk. The trade agreement offers a marginal reduction in US tariffs but binds Bangladesh to a broad framework covering defence, energy, trade, labour, and digital governance in highly unequal terms.

The agreement mandates that Bangladesh increase its purchases of US military equipment and restricts procurement from certain countries (read China and Russia), and allows Washington to terminate the deal if Dhaka enters trade agreements with countries classified as 'non-market economies' (read China). Possibly, Washington rushed the deal once it became apparent that the nationalist BNP might not need the Jamaat's support to form the government, or it is payback time for Yunus. But the Rahman government will now be called upon to navigate the deal.

The first big statement on India by a top BNP leader has been about the intention to press formally for Sheikh



Hasina's extradition. Indeed, in an oblique reference to Indian hegemony, PM-designate Tarique Rahman demanded that "the nation is not turned into a subservient state". The reality is that Hasina is unlikely to be repatriated. India could have played the role of a mediator, but that is not possible, having gone overboard on 'anti-Hindu violence', which was illogical, when the Bharatiya Janata Party government's own track record is dismal.

Rahman said the "interests of Bangladesh and its people will determine our foreign policy". This is in line with the BNP's 'Bangladesh First' policy, which mirrors Washington's 'America First' policy. But the first BNP government was not an easy time for New Delhi. Yet, the paradox is, the BNP's win is the best outcome for India. The BNP-Jamaat coalition years under late Khaleda Zia were marked by turbulence and deep mutual mistrust. Ties with India cooled quickly following a seizure of truckloads of weapons in Chittagong in 2004, allegedly destined for use by Indian rebel groups. Nonetheless, Rahman is open to a transactional relationship.

A poll-season plank

The road ahead is tricky, for Bangladesh's election will also significantly shape the political rhetoric in neighbouring Indian states and impact the ongoing debates about cross-border migration, demographic change, and border governance, which in turn will shape the political climate for Assembly elections in West Bengal and Assam between March and May.

Conceivably, the gains by the Jamaat, which doubled its vote share, would get woven into the narrative about the growing electoral salience of religious mobilisation amid economic grievance. In particular, in the West Bengal Assembly polls, Bangladesh is not only a neighbour but also a central reference point – less a foreign policy concern than a domestic political proxy through which citizenship, demography, and belonging are contested.

Without as much as directly naming internal Muslim minorities, the BJP may find it expedient to frame West Bengal as the next frontier in a national project of border control and cultural consolidation. On the other hand, the TMC will strive to recast the BJP's rhetoric as an unwarranted extrapolation, out of sync with Bengali culture and detrimental to the region's social fabric and cultural ethos. The TMC narrative is both good politics and the truth. Suffice it to say, Bangladesh becomes a rhetorical lever through which competing visions of Indian nationhood, federal authority, and citizenship are being contested in eastern India.

Thousands of Awami League rank-and-file have reportedly crossed into India after the July 2024 uprising. As The Guardian reported earlier this month, 'The proactive presence of Awami League in Kolkata and Delhi has raised increasingly uncomfortable questions for India, particularly its role in allowing the activities of a suspended party to continue from its soil and the haven given to some of Bangladesh's most wanted political fugitives.'

Bangladesh voted for moderation, and an appropriate Indian response is called for. But for that, a leap of faith is needed: a sincere assimilation of the message of the 2024 uprising. New Delhi should rope in Mamata Banerjee to rebuild the broken ties. Banerjee congratulated the citizens of Bangladesh as well as 'Tarique Bhai' and conveyed greetings to the nation ahead of the holy month of Ramzan. The real question is not whether this world is real, but how we choose to live in it.

(The writer is a former diplomat)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

Solo in Scotland

I felt a strange kinship—between myth and modernity

SHARADA PRAHLADRAO

A few years ago, after attending a conference in London, I found myself on a package tour to historic Scotland. It was one of those journeys that begins as a simple itinerary but slowly unfolds into something far more intimate and memorable.

On a cold, drizzly London morning, a small group of us waited under a shop's awning for our bus. Everyone was Indian—some residents, others tourists—and most were travelling with family or partners. I was travelling solo, and I could sense the curiosity in their glances. Conversations were sparse, smiles polite but guarded. Once the guide arrived, luggage was loaded and the bus rolled into the countryside.

Our entry into Scotland was through Gretna Green, famed as the "marriage capital" of the UK. Scotland has many places of tourist interest, such as Edinburgh Castle, Loch Lomond, etc., but what remains in the memory is the unforgettable scenery. The Scotland landscape is mesmerising and very different – this difference has to be seen and felt to be understood. Cold winds rip through the bare branches, and the grey skies seem ominous. When the sun peeps out, the sheep come to graze, and the forests in the distance seem to be hiding secrets.

Driving through the Highlands and Lowlands was almost meditative. The Highlands, rugged and solemn, spoke of clans, loyalty, and deep-rooted kinship; the Lowlands unfolded gently with rolling green pastures. The deep silence was broken only by streams cascading down mountainsides. Our poetry-spouting guide animated the journey by pointing out film locations from Hollywood and Bollywood. One morning, the guide announced we would be seeing horses. Expecting a farm, I was instead confronted by the Kelpies at Falkirk—towering steel equine sculptures, breathtaking in scale and symbolism. Rooted in legend, these shape-shifting creatures are said to lure humans, sometimes as horses, sometimes as people. Standing there, surrounded by fellow travellers snapping photos and laughing, I felt a strange kinship—between myth and modernity, strangers and companions.

Edinburgh's cobbled streets felt like a living postcard. Bagpipers in kilts played familiar tunes, and outside a chapel, a newly married couple emerged, glowing. I joined others in taking photographs, all of us briefly sharing in their joy. Whisky shops beckoned next, and we learned the nuances of single malt Scotch—distilled in a single distillery, aged patiently, and sampled enthusiastically.

Mealtimes became the real bonding spaces. While lunches were quick and functional, dinners were always at Indian restaurants, accompanied by old Hindi songs. By the second day, conversations became meaningful – questions about hometowns, languages and families flowed easily. Initially they were puzzled by my solo travel, but by the end of the trip many said that travelling alone is fun and that they must try it too! After four days together, we had become more than fellow travellers—we formed a transient but close-knit community, sharing laughter, support, and stories from our lives.

Now, the trip exists as a tender memory of misty mountains, shimmering lochs, legends, laughter, and a guide whose parting *shayari* lingered—"I drank all night and wasn't intoxicated; I looked into your eyes in the morning and drowned."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A nationwide audit is urgent

Apropos 'Dam safety: Time for a nationwide audit' (Feb 19), the editorial rightly reframes ageing dams as a national security issue rather than a mere engineering inconvenience. With nearly 80% of India's large dams set to outlive their design life by 2050, and the Tungabhadra crest gate failure of 2024 serving as a grim preview of what neglect invites, the case for an immediate, mandatory nationwide structural audit is undeniable. The emerging cybersecurity threat to digitally automated dam controls adds a new layer that policymakers have barely begun to address. Episodic inspections triggered by near-disasters must give way to continuous sensor-based structural health monitoring.
K Chidanand Kumar, Bengaluru

Transparency is key

I refer to 'Another thrust to the urban engine' (Feb 19). While the Rs 1 lakh crore Urban Challenge Fund is ambitious, experience shows that funds often fail to deliver due to corruption, poor planning, and delays. Urban projects tend to favour cosmetic infrastructure over affordable housing, sanitation, and public health. Without transparency, accountability, and citizen participation, the fund may deepen inequality. Environmental safeguards and protection of the urban poor must be ensured for truly inclusive growth.
Arya Binnu, Bengaluru

Prioritise inclusivity

The editorial 'Pluralism hits an off-key note' (Feb 17) rightly highlights concerns over mandating the full rendition of Vande Mataram. National symbols unite best through respect, not compulsion. Sensitivity towards diverse beliefs strengthens patriotism and constitutional values. The government must prioritise inclusivity to preserve harmony.
Gursimran Kaur Sethi, Bengaluru

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

We are proud that the AI Summit is here. This criticism is intended to mislead the people, while such a large and prestigious event is taking place. Rahul Gandhi should understand that India is moving forward in IT and AI.
N Ramchander Rao,
Telangana BJP President

The trouble with most of us is that we would rather be ruined by praise than saved with criticism.

Norman Vincent Peale

TO BE PRECISE

IN PERSPECTIVE

Borrowed robots: India's test of trust

The AI summit debacle exposes structural faultlines and the risks in incentivising spectacle over substance

MOUSUMI ROY

An 'AI Robot' on display at the ongoing India AI Impact Summit in New Delhi sparked massive controversy after a professor claimed it was developed at the Centre of Excellence of the institution she represents – Galgotias University. Fact-checking revealed that the robot is a commercially available Chinese model. The explanation shifted from authorship to ambiguity: perhaps there had been a misunderstanding, perhaps the communication was unclear, perhaps the university had "worked on its development". A soccer drone showcased at the same booth appeared strikingly similar to an existing South Korean model, yet it was described as "end-to-end engineered" in-house. Eventually, officials asked the university to vacate the space. At the same event, however, a genuine AI robot developed by an Indian startup incubated at IIT Kanpur stood on display as a quiet reminder that serious innovation does exist in the country.

The episode is not just about one institution or one professor. It is about incentives, credibility, and the fragile ecosystem of trust on which science depends. India's private higher-education sector has expanded dramatically over the past two decades. Many institutions have built impressive campuses and attracted large student cohorts. Yet the business model of some of these universities raises uncomfortable questions. Structured as charitable trusts but operating in competitive markets, these institutions need to signal relevance, modernity, and technological sophistication to attract students. In such an environment, marketing can overshadow the method.

Real research is slow, expensive, and uncertain. It requires patient funding, strong faculty development, laboratory infrastructure, and a culture of peer review. It does not always produce dramatic visuals and brochures. In contrast, presenting off-the-shelf hardware as "innovation" generates immediate visibility. But it also risks long-term damage.

When credibility is compromised in public forums, the cost extends beyond one university. It feeds broader cynicism about the quality of Indian engineering education. Industry leaders have often remarked that a significant proportion of engineering graduates lack job-ready skills. The underlying concern remains real as curriculum quality, faculty capacity, and research exposure remain uneven.

The roots of this problem are not new. In the 1960s, biologist J B S Haldane, who became an Indian citizen and worked extensively in the country, criticised bureaucratic inertia, hierarchy, and professional vanity in Indian laboratories. He described young scientists constrained by paperwork and status politics – originality was discouraged, and credit was monopolised by senior figures. His frustration was not with Indian intellect, which he admired, but with institutional culture.

Six decades later, some of those patterns remain familiar. Administrative compliance often dominates academic life. Research evaluations are driven by quantity rather than quality. VIP culture intrudes into scientific spaces. When prestige and image take priority over method, shortcuts proliferate.

The issue extends beyond one summit fiasco. It touches on a deeper tension between science and spectacle. Modern science is not defined by its geography or its age. It is defined by methods such as hypothesis testing, experimentation, falsifiability, peer scrutiny, and statistical inference. It accepts uncertainty and seeks to reduce it through evidence.

Even in quantum mechanics, often misappropriated in popular discourse, probability is not a rhetorical escape hatch but a mathematically precise feature of nature. When predictions fail, theories are revised or discarded. In contrast, systems that absorb failure without correction cannot claim scientific status.

Rewarding real innovation

When institutions borrow the language of cutting-edge science without submitting to its discipline, they erode public trust. This does not mean dismissing India's cultural traditions. Traditional medical systems or historical knowledge can be studied rigorously. But they must enter laboratories as hypotheses to be tested, not as conclusions to be validated.

What, then, are India's prospects in artificial intelligence? Despite high-profile embarrassments, they remain significant. The country possesses strong mathematical foundations, a vast software workforce, growing startup ecosystems, and leading research institutions such as the IITs and the IISc. Government initiatives have signalled ambition in AI infrastructure and policy development. Indian researchers contribute meaningfully to global AI scholarship.

The risk lies not in lack of talent, but in misaligned incentives. The solution is cultural as much as structural. Integrity must be non-negotiable. Funding models should reward reproducible research and faculty development, not merely infrastructure and enrolment growth. Students must be trained not only in coding skills but also in scientific thinking.

The AI Summit incident will fade from the headlines. But the underlying question will persist: does India want to perform science, or practise it?

(The author writes about politics, material culture, and economic history)

'The aim is to dismantle the entire cybercrime ecosystem, not just individual attackers'

The Karnataka State Police has rolled out several innovative measures and proposed a fusion of different technological innovations to tackle the rapidly evolving landscape of cybercrime. Pronab Mohanty, Director General of Police and head of the Cyber Command Centre (CCC) in Karnataka, speaks about enforcement, preparedness, and privacy concerns. Excerpts:

Pronab Mohanty, *DGP and head of Cyber Command Centre, Karnataka, in conversation with*
Nina C George

THE DEEP TAKE

● Do enforcement efforts against cybercrime need to be strengthened? Are the police stations overwhelmed by the surge in cases and shortage of technical personnel?

Karnataka police has long been regarded as a bellwether in technology-intensive enforcement. The state was among the first to adopt a comprehensive Cyber Security Policy in 2023, followed by the establishment of an independent Cyber Command in 2025.

However, Bengaluru's position as India's largest IT cluster has made it a prime target for cybercriminals and fraudsters. Cybercrime has risen sharply. In 2024 alone, over 22,000 cases were reported in Karnataka, of which nearly 17,000 were from Bengaluru. While Karnataka Police is cyber-savvy compared to many other states, the sudden spike in cases has stretched resources. Also, personnel trained in conventional policing now face a steep learning curve. Concurrent with the steep rise in cybercrime, there has also been a significant rise in attacks and threats to the state's ICT infrastructure. Hence, the government has recently created the Cyber Command, which is uniquely structured to deal with these twin threats and tackle several related problems in a comprehensive manner. The visionary series of judgments of Justice Nagaprasanna last year has defined the way forward comprehensively.

● Ransomware has evolved into multi-layered extortion, including data theft and tailored ransom demands. Are we technologically equipped to handle this?

Modern ransomware operations now employ multi-stage attack techniques that resemble advanced persistent threat (APT) operations. Victims face not only operational disruption but also the threat of public exposure of confidential data. Some groups have extended this approach, adding distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks or targeting customers, partners, and stakeholders to apply additional pressure. The police have kept pace and achieved some success in disrupting such attacks. When an attack is reported, investigators work closely with the affected organisation to preserve evidence, secure logs, and capture volatile data such as memory, running processes, and network connections. Following initial triage, investigators conduct digital forensic analysis to reconstruct the attack lifecycle.

Simultaneously, we also conduct financial investigations to track ransom payments, typically made in cryptocurrencies. Rather than focusing solely on individual attackers, law-enforcement agencies increasingly aim to dismantle the broader criminal ecosystem, including command-and-control servers, leak websites, malware-distribution networks, and hosting providers that support ransomware groups. These actions are typically carried out through multinational operations involving agencies such as the FBI, Europol, Interpol, and national cybercrime units, reflecting the transnational nature of ransomware activities.

● Are you planning specialised training to create force multipliers within the police in the fight against cybercrime?

The new Cyber Command has four sub-verticals, one of which is the training, outreach and capacity-building unit. This unit aims at including experts from academia, law schools, corporates, other agencies, and even NGOs and activists who will participate in the process of fighting cybercrime and advise on cybersecurity. Karnataka already has platforms such as the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) and NGOs like the CySecK that support law enforcement. In fact, the state police already has an institution called the CCITR, which operates out of the CID premises and trains police personnel in advanced digital forensics regularly. The participation of experts from academia and the industry will offer a three-fold solution: firstly, it will expose the police staff to advanced practices in digital forensics and cybersecurity methods; secondly, the police department will avail itself of the services of these advanced practitioners for free; and thirdly, such a hub will allow interns and researchers to hone and upgrade their skills by solving real-world problems in real-time.

● Could enhanced cyber security and surveillance measures compromise individual privacy? How do you balance the two?

It is inevitable that while exercising greater vigilance in the cyber domain using surveillance mechanisms, some individuals' privacy may be impacted adversely. To achieve a stable trade-off between cybersecurity and privacy protection, police and investigative agencies have adopted a lawful, proportionate, and accountable surveillance framework. The first step that is taken is to ensure that all surveillance activities are conducted under clearly defined legal authority, with procedures specifying when and how personal data can be collected, processed, and retained. Surveillance is targeted rather than indiscriminate, focusing only on individuals or networks reasonably suspected of criminal activity. Second, strong oversight and accountability mechanisms are baked in. Third, police agencies have adopted Privacy-by-Design technological approaches. Fourth, educating citizens about cyber threats, encouraging voluntary reporting of cyber incidents, and promoting secure digital practices by the police have reduced the need for excessive surveillance while strengthening collective cybersecurity resilience.

America's Kurdish allies oversaw two dozen sites holding thousands of members of the terrorist group and their families. Their withdrawal has left the system in chaos

CARLOTTA GALL AND HUSSAM HAMMOUD

An empty Shaddadi prison after a mass escape of Islamic State detainees being held there in Al-Shaddadi, Syria, on Feb. 7, 2026. THE NEW YORK TIMES

Power shift in Syria upends an archipelago for ISIS prisoners

Orange jumpsuits lay strewed on the ground, dropped in a trail as the prisoners made their escape, the only sign left of the former inmates. The guards' quarters were abandoned, and the prison gates swung in the wind.

The prison break in January just outside the town of Shadaddi in northeastern Syria was a stark example of the sudden change of power that has upended a system of two dozen high-security prisons holding thousands of members of the terrorist group the Islamic State.

In recent weeks, Syrian government forces seized control of a wide swath of territory in northeastern Syria from the Syrian Democratic Forces, or SDF, a Kurdish-led force that had worked for years with a US-led coalition to combat the Islamic State and to guard camps and prisons.

The change has now made the problem of the prisoners one for President Ahmad al-Sharaa, testing his commitment to fighting extremism. It has also forced a rapid recalculation by the coalition and many other states on what to do with the thousands of detainees and families held in prisons and camps since the defeat of the Islamic State in 2019.

Shortly after the breakout at Shadaddi prison on January 19, the US military began a complex operation to transfer thousands of adult male detainees to detention facilities in Iraq, starting with those considered the most dangerous.

The Syrian government took control of several prisons and detention camps, including Shadaddi prison and a sprawling camp known as Al Hol, which housed more than 20,000 women and children, some displaced by the war but many of them families of fighters from the Islamic State, also known as ISIS.

A team from *The New York Times* visited both facilities early this month. Shadaddi was deserted. In Al Hol, entire sections of the camp appeared uninhabited, with tents in shreds and a school building in one section abandoned.

Syria has made it clear that it would not continue to run the prison system the way it had been. After it took over Al Hol, the government allowed thousands to leave, and it announced Tuesday that it had evacuated or relocated the last families from the camp.

"Al Hol includes many families who are not ISIS," including women and children displaced by the war, Badri al-Masloukh, the deputy governor of nearby Deir el-Zour province, said in an interview. "Keeping them there is not a solution."

But the government also blamed the SDF for withdrawing from Al Hol without coordinating a handover of the camp. Government forces arrived 10 hours after the SDF had left, which it said created a security vacuum that allowed hundreds of families to escape. In the chaos, the Islamic State was primed and ready to break out some of its members, according to Bashar Hassan, an independent researcher in Syria who follows the group. The Islamic State had sleeper cells in Syria, but operatives also arrived from Iraq around January 19, apparently to take advantage of the disarray, he said.

Aid organisations that worked at Al Hol warned that the sudden mass departure raised a host of security questions, not just about those who had escaped but also about whether some in the Syrian security forces helped open the gates for the detainees.

Al-Sharaa, who led a group affiliated with al-Qaida in Syria during the civil war, has been accused of harbouring extremists and Islamics who sympathise with ISIS in his own ranks. Government officials have denied that, saying the government has come under attack from ISIS members and is sincere in its opposition to the group.

A vast camp, Al Hol is divided into sections, with the annex housing 6,000 women and children who were neither from Syria nor from Iraq. The majority were Chinese, Russians and Turks. Aid workers visiting the camp in recent days said the annex had been emptied out.

The government said it was monitoring the families of ISIS fighters with foreign nationalities who had left the camp to head off any potential security threats.

There was a steady flow of Syrian and Iraqi families leaving the camp, helped by a convoy of vans, pickups and buses up until last weekend. A post on an Al Hol chat group on Telegram on Sunday described families camped on the roads begging for rides, and friends and volunteers helping them return to their families.

One guard said the government had organised what he described as large-scale evacuations of inmates in recent days.

According to him, about 5,000 women and children were evacuated in buses from February 7-9 to camps in Idlib province in northwestern Syria. Others thought to have links to ISIS were being transported to another camp in Aleppo province, he said.

Syrian inmates, who include people displaced by the war, were being released if a relative came to vouch for them, he said. One relative was allowed inside to help them pack up their belongings and dismantle their tent, he said.

The guard denied that there was much smuggling of inmates, saying that two smugglers who had tried to take out people had been arrested. The guard spoke on the condition that his name not be published because he was not allowed to talk to the media.

At Shadaddi prison, there were some signs that the breakout had occurred with outside help. The outer camp occupied by guards showed no sign of fighting or violence, but bullet holes on two sets of inner metal gates indicated that people had shot out the locks from the outside.

The Syrian government played down the importance of the breakout, saying it had recaptured all but 20 of the escapees.

The US operation that unfolded in the days after took place under heavy security.

Warplanes circled overhead as US troops in armoured vehicles escorted a convoy of five buses from a prison in the northeastern city of Hasakah. The buses transferred prisoners to military bases for flights to Iraq, an SDF official said.

Within three weeks, the US military said, it had moved out 5,700 detainees, starting with those considered "high value."

The men were to be held in Baghdad and tried under the supervision of the Supreme Judicial Council, Khalid Shawani, the Iraqi minister of justice, said in a statement issued February 12.

Most of the detainees were not Iraqis but will be tried in Iraq and then transferred to their home countries, he said.

The government also took over control of the Aqtan prison, on the edge of the city of Raqqa, in late January after a dayslong armed confrontation with SDF guards. Eventually, the guards were provided safe passage out. But then families mobbed the prison demanding the release of their relatives inside, just as prisons had been emptied after the fall of dictator Bashar Assad in December 2024.

The New York Times

Ban or balance?

UDIT JAIN AND HARSHITA GUPTA

Social media giants Meta, TikTok and YouTube are facing trial in the Superior Court of Los Angeles over allegations that they deliberately deploy addictive design features, leaving scores of teenagers addicted to their platforms and suffering from mental and physical health concerns. Meanwhile, several countries, including the United Kingdom and Greece, are considering a ban on social media use for children under 15. Australia and France have already moved in that direction.

In India, concerns about social media addiction have also been raised, most recently in the Economic Survey, which discussed measures adopted by Australia and suggested that similar steps could be considered by Indian authorities.

Recently, the European Commission, in a preliminary enquiry against TikTok, found that the platform had failed to comply with the Digital Services Act regarding addictive design. The problem, however, is not confined to a single platform. Academicians argue that many platforms are intentionally designed to encourage compulsive use. Features such as indefinite scroll, constant notifications, algorithm-driven feeds and the dopamine rush associated with content consumption can foster dependency.

However, a blanket ban, premised on the assumption that social media is inherently harmful, is misguided. Research indicates that social media has opened new avenues for academic engagement. Studies consistently show that when used appropriately, it can enhance digital literacy and self-confidence among children. A blanket prohibition could undermine children's welfare and isolate vulnerable young people from peer support networks and crisis resources.

Notably, all social media platforms are not alike, nor do they serve a homogeneous group. Their impact varies across age groups, gender, and socio-economic contexts. Any holistic policy must take these differences into account. The European Commission also undertook a longitudinal study for the same purpose. Furthermore, exclusive reliance on digital face recognition technology or age verification models, as seen in the case of the Australian government, does not ensure complete accuracy. Stemming from this are privacy-related concerns, which also need to be addressed before implementing age verification methodologies to bar children from social media.

The problem posed by social media addiction demands a more nuanced approach rather than a blanket ban from the Indian perspective. While the use of smartphones and electronic devices has increased among children, the ownership of such devices is limited. Consequently, the usage of social media is often on parents' or family members' devices and through their registered accounts or email IDs. In such scenarios, there are practical hurdles in implementing the ban. Additionally, the success of the implementation of such a ban invariably depends on the cooperation of social media giants and the verification framework adopted by them.

Another pertinent issue is how to balance the harmful effects with the benefits of social media. The Australian government has not banned social media in *toto*. It has excluded messaging platforms, health, education, business, and professional networking platforms from the purview of the ban. However, the question arises that even the conventional platforms, such as YouTube, host educational, health-related content, and mandating a blanket ban would deprive children of useful content.

Beyond this, social media addiction is also a mental health concern. A knee-jerk ban on social media would not alleviate the condition of such children; rather, it would make them more anxious without addressing the issue of mental health. In 2025, AIIMS Delhi launched India's first digital addiction centre for research on digital addiction. Similarly, in 2021, the Tamil Nadu and Kerala governments also launched digital addiction rehabilitation centres. However, there is no report available on the outcomes achieved by these institutions. It is necessary that the working of these institutions be assessed and a nationwide digital addiction rehabilitation policy be brought about with wide consultation and expert inputs. Furthermore, digital hygiene and safety must be a part of the school curriculum.

An empathic mental health policy, digital literacy, and hygiene are the keys to resolving the problems posed by social media. India needs to take a more calibrated approach rather than adopting a knee-jerk reaction.

(The writers are students at the National Law University, Jodhpur)

OUR PAGES OF HISTORY

50 YEARS AGO: FEBRUARY 1976

Emergency being gradually liberalised: PM

New Delhi, February 19
Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said today that the state of emergency was being gradually liberalised in view of the improved situation in the country. Addressing a group of French booksellers and publishers, Mrs. Gandhi said her main concern was to maintain unity, stability and discipline in the country. "Since some progress had been made in this regard, we are gradually liberalising Emergency. We have released some Opposition leaders. Of course, we had no intention of keeping them in jail for long," she added.

25 YEARS AGO: FEBRUARY 2001

Action against ultras will continue, asserts Narayanan

New Delhi, Feb 19
President K R Narayanan today declared that the government would relentlessly continue action against terrorist organisations operating in Jammu and Kashmir and questioned the sincerity of Pakistan's oft-repeated offer to resume the stalled bilateral dialogue process. Expressing deep concern over Islamabad's unwillingness to positively respond to India's ceasefire initiative, he said: "Its protestations about its eagerness to resume talks with India do not carry conviction so long as it allows the terrorists' bombs to do the talking."

OASIS | SURYAKUMARI DENNISON

Frankness, not flattery, is a friend

'Did you get hit by a truck?' demanded Gabriel. My young grandnephew was voicing what adults were hesitant to say. Earlier that day, while out on my walk, I had fallen and hurt myself. Since people had politely refrained from mentioning my injuries, I had no idea how unsightly I appeared.

When Gabriel came out with his candid comment, I glanced in the mirror. To my dismay, I saw that my nose and forehead were mottled with bruises, and I had a swollen black eye. I hastened to apply a cold compress and other restorative remedies, but none of them worked wonders. "I look terrible," I wailed.

Gabriel nodded, rather too readily. "You do," he agreed, "and your scars will take ages to go away." Strangely enough, that unpalatable utterance proved more effective than my creams and concealers. Casting cosmetics aside, I settled down to wait for my abrasions to heal. A week has passed, and I face the world (pun intended) with positivity tempered by pragmatism.

There is considerable merit, idiomatically speaking, in calling a spade a spade. Even more commendable is the good sense to accept unvarnished statements of unpleasant facts. Hans Christian Andersen's story of a man, whose new clothes were no clothes, might not have taken an embarrassing turn if someone in the emperor's inner circle had been sincere. He or she should have pointed out that the extraordinary apparel, touted by tricksters, was nonexistent. Lacking upfront intervention, the emperor stepped out majestically, convinced that he was magnificently dressed. Spectators, believing that the gorgeous garments were only visible to the wise, acclaimed him. One little boy, however, bravely blurted out that the emperor was unclad.

"Children and fools tell the truth," is a proverb which means that those who are innocent and guileless are forthright, making no attempt to be socially or politically correct. So are genuine well-wishers who have our best interests at heart. We ought to be open to their outspoken opinions, welcoming constructive criticism that is beneficial to us.

"You are putting on weight and had better resume your walks," remarks Gabriel bluntly. This is not quite what I want to hear, but I have to comply. After all, frankness, not flattery, is a friend.

Need for global naval architecture to secure high seas: Rajnath

Bid to strengthen ways to resolve maritime disputes, curb terrorist activities

KALYAN RAY
VISAKHAPATNAM, DHNS

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh being received by the Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi for the inauguration of MILAN 2026 in Visakhapatnam. PTI

MARITIME OUTREACH

- MILAN 2026 brings together naval chiefs, ships, aircraft, and professional delegations from 74 countries
- Exercise to supplement the existing UN Convention on the Law of the Sea
- The Navies' role in international peace-making is on the rise, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh empasised.

With oceans increasingly becoming theatres of conflict, Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday flagged the need for a "global naval architecture" on information-sharing, supplementing the existing UN law.

While the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea could provide a robust legal framework, the proposed architecture would further strengthen ways to resolve maritime disputes, besides taking action against criminal and terrorist activities, protecting links of communication, and facilitating information exchange, he said.

"There has also been a rise in contests for ownership of straits and channels, sometimes causing threats of flare-up. Increasing international attention to underwater resources, particularly rare-earth minerals, is adding a new dimension to this tension," he said at Milan 2026, a naval exercise in which 74 countries are participating. "In addition, there is a need to guard our waters from the nefarious terrorist activities spreading tentacles across countries and regions."

With traditional threats co-existing with emerging challenges such as piracy, maritime terrorism, illegal fishing, trafficking, cyber vulnerabilities, and disruptions to critical supply chains, Singh said the navies' role in international peace-making was on the rise.

His comments came a week after the Indian Navy assumed command of Combined Task Force (CTF) 154, a key multinational training task force under the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) — a 47-nation naval partnership based in Bahrain that promotes security and stability across 3.2 million square miles of international waters by countering non-state actors, terrorism, and piracy, to keep the shipping lanes safe and secure. It is headed by a US Navy vice-admiral, while a UK Royal Navy commodore is the deputy.

Created in 2023, CTF 154 was specifically oriented towards training and capacity-building of member nations. "Selection of India as the command of the force reflects the region's growing trust in India's professional expertise and operational experience," sources said.

It operates alongside CMF's other task forces: CTF 150 (Maritime Security), CTF 151 (Counter-Piracy), CTF 152 (Maritime Security in Arabian Gulf) and CTF 153 (Maritime Security in Red Sea).

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh Tripathi said the strong global participation in Milan 2026 not only reflected the growing confidence and trust placed on the Indian Navy but would also signal New Delhi's ability to look beyond local concerns and join hands to safeguard the global commons.

Buoyed by the success of the Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) Sagar, in which an Indian Navy ship was put on a month-long deployment with 44 crew from nine Indian Ocean region countries, IOS 2.0 would be launched in April with wider participation, he said.

SC grants bail to Vikram Bhatt in cheating case

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Supreme Court on Thursday granted bail to filmmaker Vikram Bhatt, who was arrested by the Rajasthan police in a cheating case.

Vikram Bhatt

A bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi also regularised the interim bail granted earlier to Bhatt's wife, Shwetambari Bhatt, in the case.

"It seems to us that the dispute essentially pertains to a commercial transaction, though the ingredients of committing an offence of cheating, etc., have been expressly mentioned in the FIR. Be that as it may, it may be appropriate for the parties to resolve the disputes through mediation. The regular bail has been granted with the expectation that the appellants will try and make efforts for the amicable resolution of the dispute," the bench said.

The court directed both parties to appear before the Supreme Court Mediation Centre.

Will cooperate with ED probe, Anil Ambani tells top court

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Beleaguered industrialist Anil Ambani has told the Supreme Court he has been cooperating with the ongoing investigations and will appear before the Enforcement Directorate in response to a summons issued for February 26 in a case of alleged massive banking and corporate fraud to the tune of Rs 40,000 crore involving the Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group (ADAG).

Anil Ambani

He also reiterated that he would not leave the country without prior permission from the top court.

In an affidavit, Ambani asserted that his role in the concerned companies had been that of a non-executive director only, and that he was not involved in the day-to-day management or operational affairs of the said companies.

He pointed out that the apex court, on February 4, 2026, recorded his statement through senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing on his behalf, that he would not leave the country without the prior permission of the court.

"By way of the present affidavit, I formally reiterate and place on record the said statement as an undertaking before this court," he said.

He also stated that he has not left India since July 2025, that is, since the inception of the present investigations, and presently has no plans or intention to travel outside India.

"It is further undertaken that in the event any requirement of foreign travel arises, I shall seek prior leave and permission of this court before undertaking any such travel," his affidavit said.

He also said he has been fully cooperating with the investigating agencies in connection with the ongoing investigations and would continue to extend complete cooperation.

"I have been summoned by the Directorate of Enforcement to appear on February 26, 2026, and I undertake to appear and join the investigation on the said date. I further undertake to fully cooperate with the authorities, ensuring procedural clarity and preventing any suggestion of evasion or selective presentation of facts by the petitioner," his response said.

He also said he is not a flight risk and has no intention whatsoever of evading the process of law.

SC stays HC order halting TN Waqf board's functions

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Supreme Court on Thursday stayed a Madras High Court order restraining the Tamil Nadu Waqf Board from exercising any powers and functions, as the mandate for having two members as non-Muslims was not fulfilled.

A bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi issued notice to the Tamil Nadu government and others seeking their responses on the petition filed by the Waqf board challenging the High Court's January 8 order.

The court, however, said that it was staying the HC order, noting that the Waqf board's constitution was prima facie not in accordance with the provisions of law. The HC restrained the board from exercising its statutory functions and roles.

Senior advocate P Wilson for the board submitted that while eight members had already been appointed, three members were yet to be nominated due to the practical difficulties arising from the Bar Council elections, since the statute mandates the appointment of a Bar Council member.

MISCELLANY

◆ COMICS ◆

Blondie

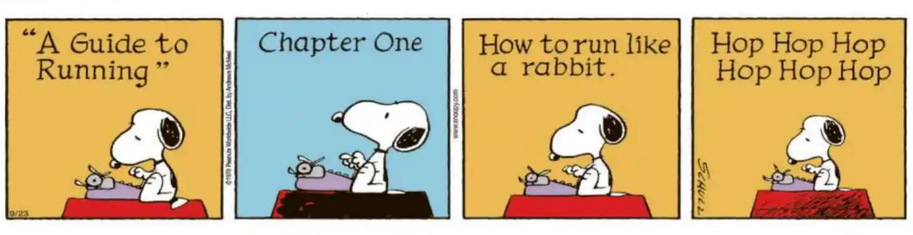
BOY, IT'S NICE TO HAVE A WHOLE LUNCH HOUR TO MYSELF OUT HERE ON THIS BENCH!
AWAY FROM THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE AND ALL THOSE PEOPLE CONSTANTLY TALKING TO ME ALL DAY
HUH, NOW IT'S KINDA LONELY OUT HERE

Hagar The Horrible

IF WE CHAT, THE JOURNEY WILL GO BY FASTER!
OH, GOOD! I CAN'T WAIT TO MAKE LAND-FALL AND FACE ALFRED THE GREAT'S FIVE THOUSAND WARRIORS!
THEN AGAIN, I'VE HEARD SILENCE IS GOLDEN!

Beetle Bailey

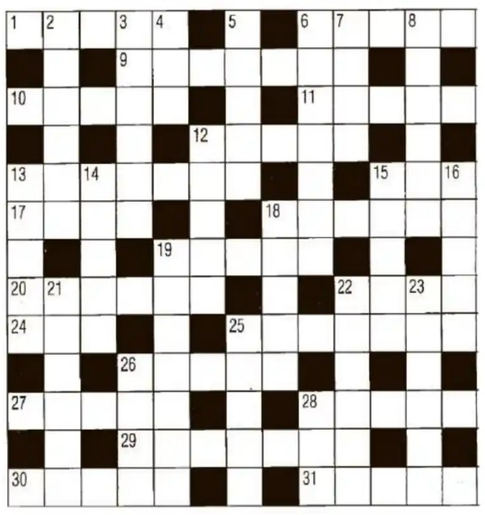
Peanuts



Marvin

SINCE I'M WEARING THIS COSTUME, WILL I GET CANDY LIKE YOU?
NO, THEY'RE NOT GOING TO LET YOU HAVE CANDY! YOU'RE A DOG!
I SEE. SO THE HUMILIATION IS THE REWARD. LOVELY

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 12358



CRYPTIC

ACROSS
1 Could start to whip in a fight (5)
6 Poetry of the silver sea (5)
9 Hesitated to make a friendly gesture to a leftist (7)
10 Being nice means very little, in a way (5)
11 Checks a broken siren (5)
12 A rule that breaks the heart of singers (5)
13 Lazes around, that is, with sticky sweets (7)
15 Play for today, outwardly? (3)
17 Top numbers, each unique (4)
18 Wild moors, right on the map, dark and gloomy (6)
19 Open up possibilities for Edwin (5)
20 Sort of shirt for a slave, that's all (3,3)
22 Easily handled, thanks to me (4)
24 She's less than motherly (3)
25 Incite riot about a Zionist leader named Kane (7)
26 Go round upsetting some strikers (5)
27 It's goodbye to Dai, maybe, who's so backward (5)
28 During the day, left a trainee to be idle (5)
29 Might he rush ahead with an operation? (7)
30 Look exhausted and fall out of the ring (5)
31 He's in textiles (5)

DOWN
2 As chancellor, Nigel made rules in advance (6)
3 Toffs properly included among saints? (6)
4 Derby, perhaps (3)
5 Special occasions that help to make life testing (5)
6 Come close to being governed no end badly? (5,2)
7 Heavenly place, a noted haunt (4)
8 Emergency message about a theatre where Pele played (6)
12 Right to issue pay (5)
13 In Ireland, a clumsy fellow, hot-headed (5)
14 Bar the clever bit (5)
15 Stone is best - start to finish! (5)
16 The old-fashioned fellows abroad (5)
18 The "Order of —" could be "12 Down" (5)
19 Agitates to make artistic creations more lofty (5,2)
21 Perhaps a capital attempt at scoring (6)
22 In teas one may find an exotic infusion (6)
23 Fruit served in medium large portions (6)
25 Rocky locations good to manoeuvre cars round (5)
26 Thus again is only fair (2-2)
28 Little Miss Morse? (3)

ACROSS
1 Navigation aid (5)
6 Dice (5)
9 Mobile home (7)
10 Record (5)
11 Supple (5)
12 Scope (5)
13 Young hare (7)
15 Perform (3)
17 Unwrap (4)
18 Cook slowly (6)
19 Sword (5)
20 Excite (6)
22 Beers (4)
24 Distress call (3)
25 Sportsman (7)
26 Shoot from cover (5)
27 Rotting (5)
28 Links (5)
29 Boring (7)
30 Navigate (5)
31 Hidden store (5)

DOWN
2 Slumbering (6)
3 Insight (6)
4 Male sheep (3)
5 Custom (5)
6 Bore (7)
7 Item (4)
8 Morals (6)
12 Lawful (5)
13 Plunders (5)
14 Swerves (5)
15 Passageway (5)
16 Anxious (5)
18 Bully (5)
19 Thin (7)
21 Frank (6)
22 Nearly (6)
23 Short compositions (6)
25 Month (5)
26 Location (4)
28 Coach (3)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 12357

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 4, Gaping 7, Armch-air 8, Ersatz 10, All-an 13, Sees (rev) 14, De-E-r 15, Aunt 16, Now 17, Garb 19, Open 21, Corkscrew 23, Rota 24, IO-TA 26, Fox 27, Bo-D-y 29, C-has 32, Glue 33, Chart 34, Street 35, Eats crow 36, Primer.
DOWN: 1, Salad 2, Smile 3, Chin 4, Green 5, P.-U.S.-S. 6, No-ti-on 9, Retort 11, Leg 12, Argo-t 13, Sub-side 15, Ark 16, New 18, Arable 20, Peach 21, C-ox 22, Co-y 23, Rotter 25, Ear 28, O-uter 30, H-airy 31, Sto-we 32, G-E-um 33, C-ash.

EASY
ACROSS: 4, Melody 7, Adelaide 8, Lesion 10, Atlas 13, Tent 14, Seer 15, Seed 16, Ape 17, Gait 19, Eels 21, Punchball 23, Rues 24, Earl 26, Peg 27, Warn 29, Edit 32, Mess 33, Snipe 34, Caters 35, Educates 36, Planet.
DOWN: 1, Tapas 2, Belle 3, Ears 4, Melee 5, Lost 6, Droops 9, Endear 11, Tea 12, Argue 13, Tethers 15, Sic 16, All 18, Answer 20, Ellen 21, Pug 22, Ban 23, Recall 25, Sip 28, Asset 30, Ditto 31, Tease 32, Mean 33, Sock.

◆SU-DO-KU-6835◆

8		1				5		2
				8		9		
2					1			4
			6				5	
5			8		2			3
	4				9			
6			3					9
		4		7				
1		3				8		6

hard

SOLUTION TO 6834

8	2	9	3	6	4	5	1	7
1	4	5	7	8	9	6	2	3
3	6	7	1	5	2	8	4	9
9	8	2	5	3	1	7	6	4
6	3	4	8	9	7	2	5	1
7	5	1	2	4	6	3	9	8
5	9	8	4	2	3	1	7	6
4	7	3	6	1	5	9	8	2
2	1	6	9	7	8	4	3	5

To solve the puzzle: To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

SCRABBLE™

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U1	C3	M3	N1	N1	A1	E1	2nd Letter Double	RACK 1
P3	Y4	E1	T1	I1	L1	M3		RACK 2
I1	E1	D2	L1	V4	Y4	R1	Triple Word Score	RACK 3
U1	N1	M3	B3	R1	S1	E1		RACK 4

PAR SCORE 150-160
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

H4	A1	R1	P3	I1	E1	S1	RACK 1 =	62
P3	A1	R1	A1	D2	E1	S1	RACK 2 =	80
T1	H4	E1	A1	T1	R1	E1	RACK 3 =	68
W4	A1	M3	P3	U1	M3		RACK 4 =	30
P3	I1	X8	E1	L1	S1		RACK 5 =	15
							JUDD'S TOTAL	255

PAR SCORE 165-175

HITORI-3289

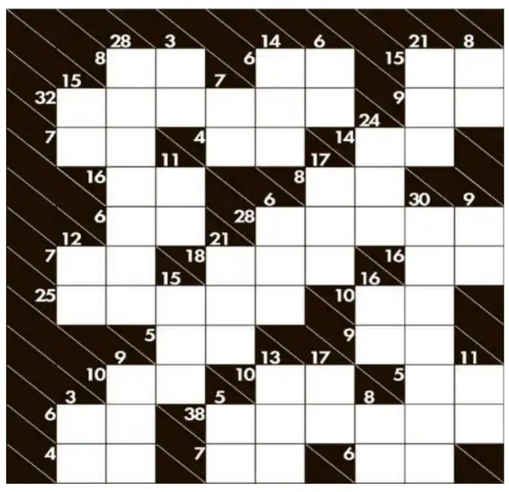
4	4	3	1	6	8	5	2
4	5	5	6	4	3	8	6
3	8	2	7	7	5	6	1
6	7	5	2	3	6	1	6
7	3	1	5	5	6	4	7
2	5	4	8	5	6	7	6
1	6	5	4	6	7	3	6
7	4	6	5	4	8	2	3

SOLUTION TO 3288

■	4	2	8	3	1	■	6
2	3	8	4	5	■	6	7
■	6	■	2	■	7	1	8
8	2	6	■	7	4	5	■
■	7	■	6	4	■	2	1
1	8	4	5	■	2	■	3
5	■	3	■	1	8	7	4
4	1	■	7	8	6	■	2

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

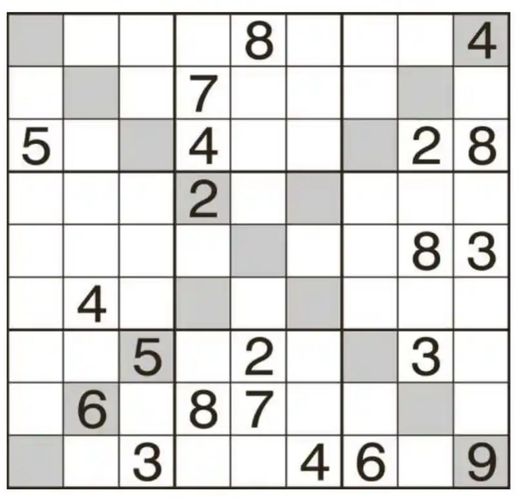
KAKURO- 3289



SOLUTION TO 3288

To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X - 3833



SOLUTION TO 3832

7	6	4	5	9	2	1	3	8
2	3	5	8	7	1	9	4	6
1	8	9	3	4	6	5	7	2
4	9	1	2	8	3	6	5	7
8	5	7	4	6	9	2	1	3
3	2	6	7	1	5	8	9	4
5	7	2	1	3	8	4	6	9
6	1	3	9	2	4	7	8	5
9	4	8	6	5	7	3	2	1

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

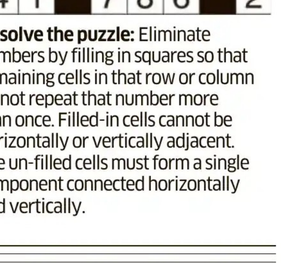
Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

RWOLG

DMMEO

EVROND

ARPNDO



Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: _____ _____ (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: THICK RUMMY MAGNET SMOOTH
Answer: They really wanted to play tennis, but compared to Mother Nature, they were — NO MATCH

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EC to begin nationwide roll revision in April

Asks CEOs to fast-track groundwork for SIR

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

NEXT PHASE

- SIR of electoral rolls in the remaining 22 states and UTs, including Karnataka, is expected to start in April.
- SIR in these states will coincide with the first phase of Census 2027.
- Officials say preparatory works include mapping the existing voters with the electoral rolls of 2002-2004.

The contentious Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the remaining 22 states and Union Territories (UTs) — including Karnataka — is expected to start in April, the Election Commission (EC) told chief electoral officers (CEOs) on Thursday.

The CEOs have been asked to "complete preparatory work" related to the SIR "at the earliest", EC Secretary Pawan Diwan said in his letter.

The letter recalled that the EC on June 24 last year ordered that that SIR would be undertaken across the country, and directed all CEOs — except Bihar, where the exercise started in June 2025 — to initiate pre-revision activities for the exercise.

The SIR in these states will coincide with the first phase of Census 2027, which is the Houselisting and Housing Census that will take place between April and September. EC officials said they were confident that both exercises would not clash

After the Bihar SIR ended, the EC announced the SIR in 12 states and UTs — Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Bengal, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Puducherry, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan.

A Special revision was conducted in Assam, instead of the SIR, owing to legal hurdles posed by an incomplete National Register of Citizens (NRC) process.

While Gujarat, Puducherry, and Lakshadweep, where the SIR has concluded, and Assam have published the final voter list, the exercise in other states is in various stages of completion.

The EC is now taking up the exercise in remaining states and UTs: Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Ladakh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Delhi, Odisha, Punjab, Sikkim, Tripura, Telangana, and Uttarakhand.

Officials said the preparatory works include mapping the existing voters with the electoral rolls of 2002-2004, when the last SIR was held.

The EC officials expect that a large proportion of voters in the current list could be linked to the previous SIR rolls. Extensive training will be given to booth-level officers to carry out the exercise.

The SIR has faced criticism from some sections, including the Opposition, which accused the EC of making it an exercise aimed at the deletion and exclusion of voters instead of their inclusion.

The EC tweaked the exercise after the Bihar SIR, but it ran into trouble again as voters faced prospect of being deleted from the rolls due to "logical discrepancies". The 2nd phase of the SIR saw 6.56 crore of 50.96 crore names getting deleted in draft list.

Focus on 'Big Five' as forces ramp up anti-Naxal push

Operation Kagar intensifies ahead of March 31 deadline

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

TARGET TOP BRASS

- Security forces zero in on top five Maoist leaders
- Amit Shah's March 31 deadline drives operation
- Telangana Police push for surrenders
- Record 576 surrenders last year

With Union Home Minister Amit Shah's March 31 deadline to wipe out Naxalism across India drawing near, Operation Kagar has gained fresh momentum. According to highly placed government sources, security forces are now zeroing in on the top five Naxal leaders, viewing their capture, surrender or elimination as crucial to meeting the Centre's goal.

The 'Big Five' comprise Thippiri Tirupati alias Devuji, who assumed the role of CPI (Maoist) general secretary after Nambala Kesava Rao's death; Muppalla Laxman Rao alias Ganapathi; Misri Besra; Malla Raji Reddy alias Sangram; and Papa Rao alias Mongu. Each is a member of the party's elite Central Committee or Politburo.

In August-September, Telugu-speaking Madiga Dalit Thippiri Tirupati stepped up as the new general secretary, upholding the tradition of Telugu leaders guiding the Maoist outfit. His formal approval by the committee remains held up, as intense security sweeps have kept the group from assembling.

Tirupati, now in his 60s, replaced Nambala Kesava Rao alias Basavaraj, killed on May 21 during Operation Kagar, a first in decades for the Maoists to lose their top boss to security forces.

Since Operation Kagar kicked off, top Maoist ranks have stayed on the run, unable to hold meetings. Forces have now sealed off Karregutta hills, a Maoist bastion on the Telangana-Chhattisgarh border, from every angle.

Muppala Laxman Rao, better known as Ganapathi and around 76 years old, has long shaped India's Naxal scene. He stepped down as general secretary in November 2018 due to poor health, handing over to Kesava Rao but staying on as advisor. He tops the 'wanted' lists for his hand in attacks.

Misri Besra leads as the supreme commander of the Eastern Regional Bureau covering Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and eastern states.

Malla Raji Reddy, a Telangana native and Central Committee member, stands out for military tactics. Papa Rao knows the Dandakaranya hotbed inside out and is linked to masterminding the 2010 Dantewada ambush that killed 76 CRPF men and eight Maoists.

The Telangana Police said the Special Intelligence Bureau (SIB) is working hard to persuade top Maoist leaders to surrender. Police have pinpointed about 17 from Telangana active across the country in various Naxal roles, with ongoing bids to bring them in.

Last year brought a record 576 surrenders to the Telangana Police since the People's War group's rise in 1980, all handled by SIB.

In January, CPI (Maoist) suffered a huge hit when PLGA Battalion Commander Badse Sukka quit with a Colt rifle and arms cache, joined by nine team members.

Number of Naxal-affected districts falls to seven

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The number of naxal-affected districts in the country has come down to seven, with three of them — Bijapur, Narayanpur and Sukma in Chhattisgarh — remaining in the "most affected category", officials said on Thursday.

A review of regions affected by Left Wing Extremism (LWE) put the number at 11 in October last year and eight last December. The fresh review has brought it down to seven and grouped them into three categories — most affected, districts of concern, and "other LWE-affected districts".

The seven districts impacted by Naxal incidents are Bijapur, Narayanpur, Sukma, Kanker and Dantewada in Chhattisgarh; West Singhbhum in Jharkhand; and Kandhamal in Odisha.

Of these, two — Kanker and West Singhbhum — are "districts of concern", where Naxalism is on the decline but focused deployment of resources is still required. The "other LWE-affected districts" are Dantewada and Kandhamal.

Under the "legacy and thrust districts" category, the number has risen to 31 from 30 in December last year. Legacy districts are those that are no longer LWE-affected but need support in terms of security and development works for some time, while thrust districts are prospective sites of Naxal expansion and require continued support.

The latest review comes as the Union government's deadline for ending the Naxal menace expires next month.

Stalin expands alliance, brings DMDK on board

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin, state Deputy CM Udhayanidhi Stalin, DMK lawmaker Kanimozhi, DMDK general secretary Premalatha Vijayakanth and others during a meeting in Chennai on Thursday. PTI

CTR NIRMAL KUMAR
TVK leader

"Captain Vijayakanth faced a lot of insults from the DMK and toiled hard to develop his party. When all these alliance partners converge on a stage, not even 1 per cent of the people will believe in them. They will not accept this alliance at any cost.

For the first time since its founding in 2005, the Desiya Dravida Murpoku Kazhagam (DMDK) of late actor Vijayakanth on Thursday joined the DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance (SPA) to fight the Assembly elections, further strengthening the ruling party alliance.

DMDK general secretary Premalatha Vijayakanth met DMK president and Chief Minister M K Stalin at Anna Arivalayam, the ruling party's headquarters, and formalised the alliance. DMDK was actually swinging like a pendulum between DMK and AIADMK by holding talks with both parties simultaneously, demanding Assembly seats in double digits and a Rajya Sabha berth.

"I am very happy to welcome DMDK to the SPA," Stalin said in a social media post. Premalatha also echoed the sentiments, saying she has merely fulfilled the wishes of her party cadres and functionaries by joining the DMK alliance.

Premalatha said the number of seats to be contested by DMDK will be decided by Stalin. Sources told *DH* that the party is likely to be allotted anywhere between six and 10 Assembly seats and a Rajya Sabha berth.

The induction of DMDK into the alliance is a major boost to Stalin's efforts to strengthen the DMK alliance, which has won three consecutive elections since 2019. By roping in DMDK, the DMK has also sent a clear political message to Congress, which is playing hardball with the DMK over power share.

DMK has made it clear that sharing power will not be on the discussion table with allies during seat-sharing talks.

Though DMDK's vote bank has dwindled over the years, the party continues to hold support among several sections, especially Naickers, the community to which Premalatha belongs.

The DMDK also believes Premalatha will be a significant addition to its campaign as she is a good orator who can take the message to women.

This is the first time that the DMDK has joined the DMK alliance. In 2016 and 2019, DMK's efforts to bring DMDK into its alliance failed.

The development is also a setback to the NDA, which was also negotiating with the DMDK.

SC sets May 5 for hearing over 200 petitions challenging CAA

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

CAA SHOWDOWN

- The hearing will be held from May 5 to May 12
- Court asks the parties to file additional documents and submissions within four weeks.
- Bench to hear the pleas related to the pan-India application of the CAA first, and then take note of the petitions pertaining to Assam and Tripura.

The Supreme Court on Thursday said that it would commence final hearings on May 5 for over 200 petitions, including the lead plea filed by the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), challenging the constitutional validity of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019.

A bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi issued procedural directions regarding the final hearings on the petitions, which have been pending since 2020.

The CAA sought to grant citizenship to migrants from the Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Christian, Jain, and Parsi communities who arrived in the country from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan on or before December 31, 2014.

The court said the final hearing would be held from May 5 to May 12. The bench said it would hear the petitioners, including the lead petitioner IUML, for 1.5 days. The bench said it would then grant the Centre one full day to advance its arguments.

It asked the parties to file additional documents and submissions within four weeks.

The court also said it would hear the pleas related to the pan-India application of the CAA first, and then take note of the petitions pertaining to Assam and Tripura.

The bench said Assam's problem was different from the rest of the country, as the earlier cut-off date for citizenship was March 24, 1971, which under the CAA had been extended to December 31, 2014.

On March 11, 2024, the Centre notified the rules, paving the way for the implementation of the CAA, four years after the contentious law was passed in Parliament.

The court had earlier declined to stay the amendment law and the rules framed thereunder.

As many as 237 pleas were filed before the court challenging the CAA's validity.

SC to watch video recordings of speech by Wangchuk

Sonam Wangchuk

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Supreme Court on Thursday said it would watch the relevant video recordings, including a 40-minute video of the interaction between police officials and activist Sonam Wangchuk, as his wife, Gitanjali J Angmo, alleged that four videos forming the basis of his detention were not shown to him and only the thumbnails on a pen drive were displayed.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal for Angmo contended before a bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and Prasanna B Varale that the state claimed the DIG, the police officer, came with a laptop, showed him four videos, and that the laptop was provided to the detainee on October 5, 2025, but those four videos were not there.

It was claimed that the pen drive was inserted into the laptop before Wangchuk, but he only saw the thumbnails and that none of the thumbnails was clicked, and the videos were not played.

Additional Solicitor General K M Nataraj for the authorities countered that there is a video showing the conversation between the DIG and the detainee.

Arguing the habeas corpus petition filed by Wangchuk's wife against the detention, Sibal claimed that not supplying the videos violated his right to effective representation before the advisory board as well as the government.

GST Hyd busts Rs 13k-cr illegal online gaming syndicate

HYDERABAD, DHNS: In a significant development linked with online gaming, the Hyderabad wing of GST Intelligence has reportedly unearthed an organised syndicate worth Rs 13,000 crore involved in operating illegal online gaming websites with the assistance of associated fintech companies, including a payment aggregator, a payment gateway, and third-party technology service providers.

The GST intelligence sleuths arrested Pankaj Kumar, founder and director of Adsum Advisory Service Pvt Ltd, in this connection.

This firm was purported to have provided services for fraud detection, customer verification, and digital KYC verification.

Evidence gathered during the investigation pointed to Pankaj Kumar being one of the masterminds, responsible for fraudulent KYC verification of merchants and shell entities on behalf of RBI-regulated entities like payment gateways and banking as payment aggregators (BAPAs), said the GST Intelligence Office in Hyderabad on Thursday.

Being the director of a company responsible for the KYC verification process, Pankaj Kumar failed to develop risk profiles of customers based on ownership and control structure, and helped in the onboarding of shell entities for UPI integration required for the flow of money from online gaming, it said.

Illegal wealth, NRC halt: Cong's 20-point chargesheet against Sarma govt

SUMIR KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI, DHNS

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra with Gaurav Gogoi during unveiling of a 'chargesheet' against the Sarma government in Guwahati. PTI

Launching an attack on the ruling BJP in poll-bound Assam, the Opposition Congress on Thursday released a 20-point "People's Chargesheet" accusing Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma of operating a "syndicate raj," massive corruption, accumulation of illegal wealth and failing to fulfil the pre-poll promises.

The document, released by senior leader and chairman of the party's candidate screening committee Priyanka Gandhi, alleged that Sarma, his ministers, and MLAs have accumulated illegal assets in their own names and in the names of family members. It questioned the failure to grant Scheduled Tribe status to six more ethnic communities, borrowings despite CAG warnings, alleged eviction of indigenous people and allocation of land to corporate interests, neglecting the Assam Accord of 1985 and halting the NRC process.

The 'chargesheet' was released when BJP national president Nitin Nabin was on a state visit and exuded confidence that the saffron party would register victory for the third straight term.

Karnataka Deputy CM and the party's central observers, DK Shivakumar, former Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel, AICC in-charge for Assam Jitendra Singh, state unit chief, Gaurav Gogoi, besides others, attended the event.

The party alleged that the leaders of the ruling party were encouraging and giving protection to illegal activities such as rat-hole mining to generate unlawful funds, and allegedly turning Assam into a government-protected corridor for the transportation of banned goods and drugs smuggled through international borders.

It further alleged establishment of a syndicate-controlled system that collects money on goods entering and leaving Assam to ensure barrier-free movement, including timber, sand, stone, coal, iron, Burmese betel nut, and other commodities, with fixed commissions collected at designated checkpoints.

Congress MP Pradyut Bordoloi said the 'chargesheet' was prepared based on consultations across state involving 5 teams that gathered opinions from grassroots organisations.

'Godse factory': Cong slams Karni Sena man's death threat to Rahul, 25 MPs

NEW DELHI/KOTA, DHNS & PTI: Karni Sena has issued a death threat to Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi over the protest against Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, prompting the Congress to claim on Thursday that it is "not an isolated outburst" but part of a "calculated and devious plan" by the "Godse factory".

In a video circulated on social media, a person claiming to be from the Karni Sena referred to Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju's allegation that Congress MPs created a ruckus in Birla's office during the first phase of the Budget Session.

The functionary claimed that BJP workers and the Karni Sena were angered by the lawmakers' actions and demanded that action be taken against 25 MPs involved.

With a photo of PM Narendra Modi and Birla as the background, the video purportedly showed the Karni Sena functionary, wearing a BJP shawl, saying that the MPs' protest was at the behest of Rahul and that they would enter his residence and open fire at him.

If no action is taken against the MPs, he said, they would attack the residences of these MPs and that the authorities would be responsible for such action. He also said he was not bothered about going to jail.

Condemning the incident, Congress leader Pawan Khera said, "The RSS-BJP ecosystem is a 'Godse factory'. The threat issued by the so-called Karni Sena against Rahul and the '25 Members of Parliament' is not an isolated outburst. It is part of a calculated and devious plan."

K C VENUGOPAL
Congress general secretary

"Self-proclaimed Modi bhakts are brazenly issuing death threats against Rahul Gandhi in broad daylight - without any reprimand from the ruling regime. This is a direct result of the toxic culture of animosity and vengeance created by the BJP in national discourse - right from Parliament to political rallies.

Khera said Rijiju "publicly lied and misled" the nation that Congress MPs abused Birla, a claim "contradicted by available video footage, which shows no such abuse".

"This is how radicalisation works: they manufacture a lie, amplify it through repetition, sanctify it with political authority, and circulate it until their followers are incited to hatred and violence. This is how Godse was created then. This is how another Godse is being instigated today," he said.

Man detained

Karni Sena spokesperson Raj Singh, who allegedly put out the video was detained by police in Rajasthan's Kota on Thursday.

'Only for money?' Top court raps pharma firm over Uzbek deaths

NEW DELHI, PTI: "Do you realise what dent it has caused to the country's image?" the Supreme Court on Thursday asked a pharmaceutical firm whose cough syrups allegedly resulted in the death of more than 18 children in Uzbekistan.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi refused to quash an order which summoned the firm and some of its officials on a complaint alleging various violations, including the manufacture and sale of drugs declared "not of standard quality".

"Only for the sake of money, you indulge in this? The nation's image is dented due to this," the bench said.

The counsel for the firm and its officials said there was nothing on record to show that consumption of the syrup had caused any death.

During the arguments in the matter before the HC, the counsel appearing for the Centre had claimed that syrup manufactured by the firm was found poisonous in Uzbekistan, resulting in death of over 18 children.

NEXT BIG POUR

Kerala government bets high on brandy after success of 'Jawan' rum

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

Inspired by the success of its 'Jawan' brand rum, the Kerala government is now set to launch a brandy.

Production will begin on February 21 at Malabar Distilleries, a state-run facility in Palakkad. The brandy is expected to hit retail shelves within a few days.

Apart from the product's price and quality, its name also remains a mystery. It is learnt that the brandy will be named 'Malabar Mystery'. A public contest to name the product had run into legal trouble, following complaints that government agencies are promoting liquor.

'Jawan' rum, produced by the state-run Travancore Sugars and Chemicals, has emerged as a popular brand, especially among consumers seeking affordable options. Priced at Rs 650 per litre, it is regarded as a superior-quality rum within its price range.

Tipplers are now pinning hopes on the upcoming brandy from another government agency, expecting it to be both affordable and of good quality. Sources said the price will be around Rs 800 per litre.

Official sources said that a fully automated production unit with a daily capacity of 13,500 cases has been set up. Production will begin with half-litre bottles, with quarter, full and one-litre variants to follow.

The Left Front government is moving ahead with the launch of the brandy, despite criticism that it is deviating from its stated policy of reducing liquor consumption through abstinence. Critics say that instead of discouraging drinking, the government is promoting liquor by extending bar working hours and permitting more bars to operate. Taxes on liquor, currently around 250%, remain a major source of revenue for the government.

The government has defended its decision, citing the revival of a defunct state-run agency and the creation of 250 job opportunities.

Established in 1952 as the Chittur Cooperative Sugar Factory, Malabar Distilleries is located on 113 acres of land at Menonpara in Palakkad, near the Tamil Nadu border.

Imran Khan declined two deal offers, says Pak PM's aide

LAHORE, PTI: A close aide to Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that jailed former premier Imran Khan was offered a "deal" twice but declined to accept it.

"Two serious attempts were made to cut a deal with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan in the past, but they failed," Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah disclosed during a talk show on Wednesday evening.

"The first attempt was led by Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and then Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur before November 26, 2024, and the second was made by a few people from abroad in the recent past. Imran Khan initially agreed but later backed out of the deal," Sanaullah said. "We want a political solution to this problem, but Khan is not willing to find a way out," he added.

Sanaullah, a close aide to Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) head Nawaz Sharif, further said Khan wants the incumbent government to be sacked so he can return to power.

Ex-South Korea leader Yoon gets life in prison

SEOUL, AFP: A South Korean court declared former president Yoon Suk Yeol's martial law bid in 2024 an insurrection, sentencing the disgraced leader to life in prison on Thursday.

Yoon abruptly declared martial law in a televised address in December 2024, saying drastic measures were needed to root out "anti-state forces". Although Yoon's bid to impose military rule lasted just six hours, it triggered widespread panic in a nation seen as a beacon of democracy in Asia.

Yoon Suk Yeol

The Seoul Central District Court found Yoon guilty of leading an insurrection, designed to "paralyse" his many critics in the National Assembly.

UK police arrest ex-prince Andrew in historic blow to royal family

King Charles backs police probe as Epstein file revelations deepen

LONDON, AFP

Britain's former prince Andrew was arrested on Thursday on suspicion of misconduct during his time as a trade envoy, as UK police investigations into allegations emerging from the Jeffrey Epstein files gathered pace.

The arrest of a royal family member is unprecedented in Britain's modern era, and within hours King Charles III issued a rare personally signed statement insisting "the law must take its course".

It was a humiliating new blow for the ousted prince, who was last year stripped of his titles and was marking his 66th birthday Thursday in custody.

"I'm pleased ... he deserves that," lawyer Emma Carter, 55, told AFP in London. "He's been hiding behind his privileges ... for too many years."

Police said they were also searching two properties, with the BBC reporting one was Andrew's former home, Royal Lodge, on the monarchy's Windsor estate west of London.

The other was his residence since the start of this month on the king's private Sandringham estate in Norfolk, eastern England, where his arrest occurred, according to British media.

Widely published images showed a fleet of unmarked cars, believed to be police vehicles, arriving there early Thursday.

"We have today (19/2) arrested a man in his sixties from Norfolk on suspicion of misconduct in public office," Thames Valley Police said, without naming the suspect, as is common practice in the UK.

"The man remains in police custody at this time," the force added.

Andrew's ties to convicted US sex offender Epstein have caused a spectacular years-long fall from grace.

His arrest follows new revelations last week that the ex-prince appeared to have sent potentially confidential documents during his time as a UK trade envoy.

In a November 2010 email seen by AFP, Andrew appeared to share with Epstein reports on several Asian countries following an official visit to the region.

The ex-royal, now known as Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, also allegedly sent the American financier details of the trip — on which he was accompanied by Epstein's business associates — along with investment opportunities months later.

Charles last year stripped his brother of his titles and ordered him to leave his Windsor mansion — though he does remain eighth in the line of succession to the British throne.

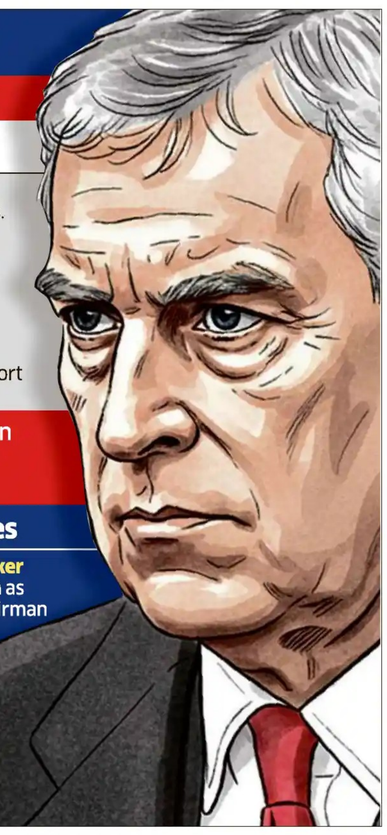
In his statement, the king reiterated he had learned of the latest claims "with the deepest concern" and that a "full, fair and proper process" would investigate the matter "in the appropriate manner and by the appropriate authorities".

"In this, as I have said before, they have our full and wholehearted support and co-operation," he added. "Let me state clearly: the law must take its course."

Charles last year ousted Andrew after one of Epstein's accusers, Virginia Giuffre, claimed in shocking detail in her posthumous memoirs that she had been trafficked to have sex with Andrew when she was a teenager.

The Giuffre family welcomed Andrew's arrest Thursday, saying "our broken hearts have been lifted at the news", adding he was "never a prince".

He has previously denied any wrongdoing in his associations with Epstein.


FALL FROM GRACE
Key moments leading to Andrew's arrest
Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor (66)
2011: Resigns as UK trade envoy after first reports of ties to Jeffrey Epstein.
July 2019: Epstein arrested on sex trafficking charges; scrutiny of Andrew intensifies.
Nov 2019: BBC interview backfires; suspends public duties days later.
2022: Settles Virginia Giuffre lawsuit.
2025: Gives up royal titles; stripped of remaining honours.
Jan 2026: US releases Epstein files alleging Andrew shared confidential trade reports.
Feb 2, 2026: Leaves Windsor residence.
Feb 9, 2026: King signals support for police inquiry.
Feb 19, 2026: Arrested on suspicion of misconduct in public office
High-profile resignations over Epstein ties
Alex Acosta
Resigned as US labour secretary in 2019
Ehud Barak
Ex-Israeli PM stepped down from business roles in 2019
Joi Ito
Quit as director of the MIT Media Lab
Leon Black
Stepped down as CEO & chairman of Apollo Global Management in 2021
Jes Staley
Resigned as CEO of Barclays in 2021
Thomas Pritzker
Stepped down as executive chairman of Hyatt in 2026

KING CHARLES III
King of the United Kingdom

"I have said before, they (police) have our full and wholehearted support and co-operation...Let me state clearly: the law must take its course.

Trump gives Iran 10-day ultimatum to seal N-deal

US deploys warships and jets as tensions rise

WASHINGTON, AFP

US President Donald Trump said on Thursday Iran must make a "meaningful deal" in its negotiations with Washington in the next 10 days or else "bad things happen", as he deployed warships, fighter jets and other military hardware in the region.

"It's proven over the years not easy to make a meaningful deal with Iran. We have to make a meaningful deal, otherwise bad things happen," Trump told the inaugural meeting of the "Board of Peace", his initiative to secure stability in Gaza.

He warned that Washington "may have to take it a step further" without any agreement, adding: "You're going to be finding out over the next probably 10 days."

Trump's comments came shortly after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu issued his own warning to Iran, saying, "If the ayatollahs make a mistake and attack us, they will receive a response they cannot even imagine".

The warnings were issued days after the US and Iran held a second round of Omani-mediated talks, this time in Geneva, with the US seeking to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear bomb — something it says it is not pursuing — and Iran seeking relief from US sanctions.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt warned on Wednesday there were "many reasons and arguments that one could make for a strike against Iran". "Iran would be very wise to make a deal with President Trump."

Trump has repeatedly threatened military action against Iran, first over a deadly crackdown on protesters last month and more recently over its nuclear programme.

Iran's atomic energy chief on Thursday said "no country can deprive Iran of the right" to nuclear enrichment, following fresh US warnings that there were "many reasons" to strike the Islamic republic.

A previous attempt at negotiations collapsed when Israel launched surprise strikes on Iran last June, beginning a 12-day war that Washington briefly joined to bomb Iranian nuclear sites.

US President Donald Trump speaks at the inaugural Board of Peace meeting in Washington DC on Thursday. REUTERS

India attends Trump's Board of Peace meeting as observer nation

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, PTI: India on Thursday attended the inaugural meeting of US President Donald Trump's Board of Peace on Gaza as an "observer" country.

According to a list of attendees at the meeting held at the Donald J Trump Institute of Peace, India was represented by Chargé d'affaires at the Indian Embassy in Washington DC Namgya Khampa. India has not joined the Board of Peace, which has been set up by Trump for the redevelopment of the Gaza Strip.

Trump announced that the US will commit $10 billion to the Board, whose members include 27 nations such as Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Hungary, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was among the numerous global leaders that the US President had invited to join the board that was announced under the second phase of a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas.

MORE PLEDGES

- $7 bn pledged by nine nations for Gaza relief and rebuilding
- Five countries to deploy troops for international stabilisation force
- Egypt & Jordan to train police for Gaza operations
- Initial deployment in Rafah to kick-start reconstruction efforts
- US pledges $10 bn, as total rebuilding costs near $70 bn

Zuckerberg denies at LA trial that Instagram targets kids

LOS ANGELES, REUTERS

Meta Platforms CEO Mark Zuckerberg on Wednesday repeatedly said during a landmark trial over youth social media addiction that the Facebook and Instagram operator does not allow kids under 13 on its platforms, despite being confronted with evidence suggesting they were a key demographic.

Mark Lanier, a lawyer for the woman suing Instagram and Google's YouTube for harming her mental health when she was a child, pressed Zuckerberg over his statement to Congress in 2024 that users under 13 are not allowed on the platform. Lanier confronted Zuckerberg with internal Meta documents.

The case involves a California woman who started using Instagram and YouTube as a child. She alleges the companies sought to profit by hooking kids on their services despite knowing social media could harm their mental health. She alleges the apps fueled her depression and suicidal thoughts.

"If we want to win big with teens, we must bring them in as tweens," read one internal Instagram presentation from 2018. "And yet you say that we would never do that," said Lanier.

Zuckerberg replied that Lanier was "mischaracterising what I am saying."

The CEO said Meta has "had different conversations over time to try to build different versions of services that kids can safely use."

GROWTH GROUP

- Zuckerberg says Meta bars under-13s, despite internal documents highlighting tweens as key growth group

India condemns Israel's 'unilateral' decisions in West Bank

UNITED NATIONS, PTI

India has joined over 100 countries and global organisations in condemning Israel's "unilateral" decisions and measures aimed at expanding its "unlawful presence" in the West Bank.

A statement was issued by the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the UN on Wednesday on behalf of 100 countries and organisations "condemning Israel's unilateral measures and rejecting annexation."

According to the statement, the signatories "strongly condemn unilateral Israeli decisions and measures aimed at expanding Israel's unlawful presence in the West Bank." "Such decisions are contrary to Israel's obligations under international law and must be immediately reversed," it said.

Earlier, 85 nations had condemned Israel's unilateral measures and policies in the occupied West Bank through the statement issued on February 17. India was not among these initial nations that had jointly issued the statement.

Later, New Delhi added its name to the joint statement that had over 100 nations and organisations. The statement said the countries reiterated "our rejection of all measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem."

"Such measures violate international law, undermine the ongoing efforts for peace and stability in the region, run counter to the Comprehensive Plan, and jeopardise the prospect of reaching a peace agreement," it said.

The countries said lasting peace based on UN resolutions, Madrid terms of reference, and Arab Peace Initiative, ending the Israeli occupation and implementing the two-State solution, remains the only path to ensure stability in the region.

SUVARNA AROGYA SURAKSHA TRUST
(Department of Health & Family Welfare)
Arogya Soudha, 7th Floor, Magadi Road, Bangalore-560023
Phone : 080-22536200. E-mail : directorsast@gmail.com

No. SAST/11/2024-FINS(e-Office-162608) Dated: 17.02.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION

Sub:- Suvarna Arogya Suraksha Trust invites short term Tender for the services of Internal Auditor from Chartered Accountant / Firms – reg.,

Suvarna Arogya Suraksha Trust has been established and registered as a separate body under the aegis of Health and Family Welfare Department under the Indian Trust Act, 1882 is implementing various Government Health Schemes. The Health Schemes of Government are being implemented through Suvarna Arogya Suraksha Trust. For the trust activities, short term Tender has been invited for providing the services of Internal Auditor from Chartered Accountant / Firm for two year. The bid is available at KTPP website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/#/portal/portal-** home from **20.02.2026.** The last date for submission of bids is **06.03.2026 up to 5.00 PM.**

Sd/- Executive Director,
Suvarna Arogya Suraksha Trust,
Bangalore

DIPR/CP/5750/SSC/2025-26

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
(Finance Department)
FISCAL POLICY INSTITUTE (FPI)
Bangalore-Mysore Road, Kengeri, Bengaluru - 560 060.
Ph: 080-2697 1000, Website: www.fpibengaluru.karnataka.gov.in

No.: FPI-PROC0TNDR(GRDN)/1/2025-ADMN Date: 20-02-2026

e-Tender Notification

Fiscal Policy Institute (FPI) invites Tender through e-procurement in two-covers mode, from the reputed agencies for the following service.

"To Provide Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract for Maintenance of Garden, Landscape and Potted Plants etc., in Fiscal Policy Institute"- Call 3.

Last date: **06-03-2026 till 3.00 PM.**

The Tender details may be downloaded from the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal: website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sd/- For Director
Fiscal Policy Institute (FPI)

DIPR/CP/YC/5764/2025-26

KARNATAKA POWER CORPORATION LIMITED
CIN: U85110KA1970SGC001919

e-TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through KPP Portal only) (Two Cover System)

Tenders are invited through KPP Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** for the following works:

SHIVA HYDRO ELECTRIC STATION

(1) No.: KPCL/2025-26/AUCTION120 Date: 14.02.2026 for **Shimsha HES-Disposal of Cable Scrap on 'As is where is' Basis.** EMD: **Rs. 55,244/-.** Last date for online submission/uploading the bid in kppp portal: **16.03.2026 up to 15:00 hrs.**

(2) No.: KPCL/2025-26/PS/WORK_INDENT3889 Date:18.02.2026 for **Testing and oil filtration of 16/20MVA, 66/11kV, 3 Phase Bank-3 Generator Transformer and 200/1-1-1A, 66kV & 1000/1-1-1A, 11kV CT's at ODY at Shiva HES.** EMD: **Rs.4864/-.** Last date for submission/uploading the bid in e-portal: **04.03.2026 up to 16:30 hrs.** Work Completion Period: **15 Days.**

(3) No.: KPCL/2025-26/PS/WORK_INDENT3715/Call-3 Date:12.02.2026 for **Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Telephone Intercom EPABX System at Shiva Hydro Electric Station.** EMD: **Rs. 4898/-.** Last date for submission/uploading the bid in e-portal: **03.03.2026 up to 15:00 hrs.** Work Completion Period: **60 Days.**

(4) No.: KPCL/2025-26/PS/WORK_INDENT3956 Date:12.02.2026 for **Supply and Replacement of Graphite Gland packing, fasteners to arrest, water leakage in 10 Penstock pipe expansion joints of Shivasamudram, HES.** EMD: **Rs. 6417/-.** Last date for submission/uploading the bid in e-portal: **04.03.2026 up to 15:00 hrs.** Work Completion Period: **90 Days from the date of handing over of site.**

Further details can be had from **Executive Engineer (EM&O) Shiva, KPCL, Shivasamudram, Malavalli Taluk, Mandya Dist., Karnataka. Mob: 9141619315**

SHIMSHA HYDRO POWER STATION

(5) No.: KPCL/2025-26/PS/WORK_INDENT3944 Date:11.02.2026 for **Design, supply, installation & commissioning of all type Turbine & Generator bearing temperature RTDs for temperature alaram & trip functioning at Shimsha Hydro Electric Station.** EMD: **Rs. 21,500/-.** Last date for submission / uploading the bid in e-portal: **03.03.2026 at 16:30 Hrs.** Work Completion Period: **90 Days .** Further details can be had from **Executive Engineer (O&M) Shimsha, KPCL, Shimshapura-571 430, Malavalli Taluk, Mandya Dist., Mob: 09902835577**

DIPR/CP/YC/5743/2025-26

BENGALURU SOUTH CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, Padmanabhanagara Division, Opp. to Sagar Hospitals, Kumaraswamy Layout, Bengaluru-560078.

No. EE(PN)/TEND/14/2025-26 Date: 19-02-2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
Two cover system (Only through GoK KPP Portal)

The Executive Engineer, Padmanabhanagara Division, BSCC, Bengaluru on behalf the Commissioner, BSCC invites Tenders from eligible contractors registered in BBMP or equivalent registration with CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES / National Highway or any State Govt. Organisations for the following works.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work
1	Annual Maintenance of Roads and Footpaths in Ward Jurisdiction area in Ward No. 191 (Old Ward No. 180).
	Approx. value of work : **Rs. 30.00 lakhs.** EMD: **Rs. 60,000/-.**
2	Annual Maintenance of Roads and Footpaths in Ward Jurisdiction area in Ward No. 192 (Old Ward No. 181).
	Approx. value of work : **Rs. 30.00 lakhs.** EMD: **Rs. 60,000/-.**
3	Annual Maintenance of Roads and Footpaths in Ward Jurisdiction area in Ward No. 193 (Old Ward No. 182).
	Approx. value of work : **Rs. 30.00 lakhs.** EMD: **Rs. 60,000/-.**
4	Providing pothole filling to Padmanabhanagara Division, BSCC in Ward No. 191, 192 and 193 (Old Ward No. 180, 181 and 182) roads for the year 2025-26.
	Approx. value of work : **Rs. 60.00 lakhs.** EMD: **Rs. 1,20,000/-.**

For each work : Stipulated period : **365 days.** Category : **Others.**

Calendar of Events: (1) Tender documents may be downloaded from KPP Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in (2)** Last date for submission of tenders : **09.03.2026 upto 4.00 pm. (3)** Date of opening of technical bid : **10.03.2026 at 4.05 pm.** Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours or from KPP Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Executive Engineer
Padmanabhanagara Division, BSCC

BENGALURU WEST CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer
(Animal Husbandry), Bengaluru-560 002.

No.AD/AH/PR-1/ABC/CWO/2025-26 Date: 19.02.2026

EOI Notification

BENGALURU WEST CITY CORPORATION invites Expression of Interest from eligible bidders for IMPLEMENTING ANIMAL BIRTH CONTROL (ABC) ANTI RABIES VACCINATION (ARV & COMBINED) and DEWORMING FOR STRAY DOGS IN BWCC, RAJARAJESHWARI NAGARA ZONE (ZONE-1) AND MALLESWARAM ZONE (ZONE-2).

Following are the Events of Bid process:

1.	EOI Reference No.	AD/AH/PR-1/ABC/CWO/2025-26
2.	Date of Commencement of Downloading of EOI Document from KPP Portal **website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**	21.02.2026 onwards
3.	Tender Inviting Authority	Chief Veterinary Officer, Head, Animal Husbandry Department, BWCC
4.	Tender Accepting Authority	Commissioner, BWCC
5.	Last date and time for uploading Online Queries in KPP Portal	24.02.2026 upto 5:00 p.m.
6.	Date and Time of Pre-bid Meeting, Address for Communication	24.02.2026 at 11:30 a.m., following venue: Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer, Head, Animal Husbandry Department, BWCC, Rajarajeshwari Nagar Zone, 18th Cross, Ideal Homes Township, Rajarajeshwari Nagar, Bengaluru-560098. Phone: 9480685206 email: cvohodah.bwcc@gmalil.com
7.	Last Date and Time for uploading of EOI in KPP Portal	07.03.2026 upto 5:00 p.m.
8.	Date and Time of Opening of EOI in KPP Portal	09.03.2026 at 5:10 p.m.
9.	Place of Opening of EOI	Online at KPP Portal

(1) Tender documents may be downloaded from the website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in (2)** Other details can be seen in the tender documents.

Sd/-, Chief Veterinary Officer,
Head, Animal Husbandry Department, BWCC.

ಪುರಸಭಾ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ, ಚಿಕ್ಕಬಾಣಾವರ
ಸಂತೆಬೀದಿ ವೃತ್ತ, ಚಿಕ್ಕಬಾಣಾವಾರ, ಚಿಕ್ಕಬಾಣಾವರ ಅಂಚೆ,
ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಉತ್ತರ ತಾಲ್ಲೂಕು, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು – 560090.
ದೂ: 080-28395098, Email: ka.chikkabanavara.tmc@gmail.com,
Website: https://chikkabanavaratown.mrc.gov.in

ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ : ಪು.ಕಾ.ಚಿ/ಟೆಂಡರ್/ತಾ.ಶಾ/12/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 19.02.2026

ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ
(ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ. ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಮಾತ್ರ)

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಸಂಗ್ರಹಣೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪಾರದರ್ಶಕತೆ ಆದ್ಯಾದೇಶ 1999–2000 ರ ಪ್ರಕಾರ ಆಕ್ಟ್ 2000ರ ನಿಯಮದಂತೆ ಸ್ಟ್ಯಾಂಡರ್ಡ್ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಡಾಕ್ಯುಮೆಂಟ್‌ನ ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ **2025–26ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ ಪುರಸಭಾ ಅನುದಾನದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿ/ಸರ್ವಿಸ್/ಸಾಮಗ್ರಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗೆ** ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದಂತೆ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸ್ಟ್ಯಾಂಡರ್ಡ್ ಡಾಕ್ಯುಮೆಂಟ್ ಪ್ರಕಾರ ಟೆಂಡರನ್ನು ದ್ವಿ–ಲಕೋಟೆ ಪದ್ಧತಿಯಡಿ ಅರ್ಹ ದರ್ಜೆಯ ನೋಂದಾಯಿತ ಸರಬರಾಜುದಾರರಿಂದ ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ. ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಟೆಂಡರನ್ನು ಕರೆಯಲಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ.

(1) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ದಾಖಲೆಗಳನ್ನು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಕೆಪಿಪಿ ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ನಿಂದ ಡೌನ್‌ಲೋಡ್ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದು. **(2) ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 26.02.2026. (3) ಟೆಂಡರನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 05.03.2026ರಂದು. (4)** ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ನಲ್ಲಿ ಪಡೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಯಾವುದೇ ತಿದ್ದುಪಡಿ ಮತ್ತು ಬದಲಾವಣೆಯಿದ್ದಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ. ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಮಾತ್ರ ತಿಳಿಯುವುದು.

ಸಹಿ/–
ಆಡಳಿತಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು,
ಪುರಸಭೆ, ಚಿಕ್ಕಬಾಣಾವರ

ಸಹಿ/–
ಮುಖ್ಯಾಧಿಕಾರಿ
ಪುರಸಭೆ, ಚಿಕ್ಕಬಾಣಾವರ

DIPR/CP/YC/5743/2025-26

NATION-BUILDING CAPITAL: Ambani says AI wouldn't eliminate jobs, but create high-skill opportunities

RIL to invest Rs 10 L cr in AI push

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) and its telecom arm Jio will invest Rs 10 lakh crore over the next seven years, starting this year, to develop AI infrastructure and services in India, RIL Chairman and Managing Director Mukesh Ambani said on Thursday.

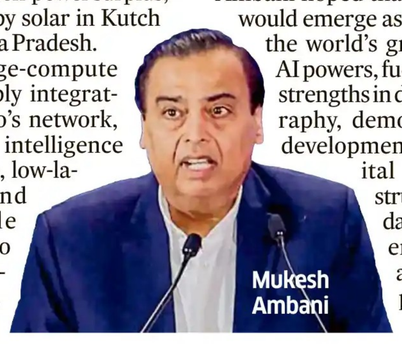
"This is not speculative investment. It is not for chasing valuation. This is patient, disciplined, nation-building capital — designed to create durable economic value and strategic resilience for decades to come," he added.

Speaking at the India AI Impact Summit 2026, Ambani said Reliance will build India's sovereign compute infrastructure through three initiatives — GW-scale data centre, green energy and nationwide edge compute.

"We have already started construction on multi-gigawatt, AI-ready data-centres at Jamnagar. Over 120 MW will come online in the second half of 2026, and a clear path to GW-scale compute for training and large-scale inference," he added.

Ambani claimed that Reliance has an in-house energy advantage with up to 10 GW of ready green-power surplus, anchored by solar in Kutch and Andhra Pradesh.

"An edge-compute layer, deeply integrated with Jio's network, will make intelligence responsive, low-latency and affordable — close to where Indians live, learn and work," he added.



Ambani's announcement follows Adani Group's $100 billion investment commitment by 2035 for building AI-ready data centres. "The investment is expected to catalyse by 2035 an additional $150 billion across server manufacturing, advanced electrical infrastructure, sovereign cloud platforms and supporting industries. Together, this is projected to create a $250-billion AI infrastructure ecosystem in India over the decade," the Gautam Adani-led conglomerate said earlier this week.

On jobs, Ambani said AI would not eliminate jobs, but instead create new high-skill employment opportunities.

He remarked that the biggest constraint in AI is not scarcity of talent or imagination, but scarcity and high cost of compute.

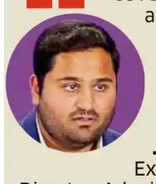
Ambani underlined the need for global cooperation in the development of the AI ecosystem. "AI is now becoming a people's movement worldwide. The success of this movement hinges critically on global cooperation and not polarisation. Be it chips or rare earths, AI works its magic through sharing, not hoarding; through collaborations, not conflicts," he said.

Ambani hoped that India would emerge as one of the world's greatest AI powers, fueled by strengths in demography, democracy, development, digital infrastructure, data generation, and AI potential.

WHAT THEY SAID

"The implications of AI in India will be more significant than anywhere in the world over the next few years, given its large population, and the country can play a global leadership role in data, privacy and security
SHANTANU NARAYEN, Chairman and CEO. Adobe

"Sectors, including healthcare, education, deep research, and medical sciences, will flourish with the power of AI... AI is becoming a really integral part of how we operate or serve our customers, build and manage our networks
SUNIL MITTAL, Chairman, Bharti Group



"India must secure sovereignty across energy, compute and cloud, and services to safeguard its AI future
JEET ADANI, Executive Director, Adani Group

"With imagination and responsible implementation, AI can transform industries, simplify complex legacy systems, and empower individuals. India, with its entrepreneurial potential, is well-positioned to lead this transformation
VISHAL SIKKA, Founder and CEO, Vianai Systems

PM Narendra Modi (centre) joins hands with (from left) Meta Chief AI Officer Alexandr Wang, Google CEO Sundar Pichai, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, and Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei, at the India AI Impact Summit 2026, in New Delhi on Thursday. PTI

OpenAI vs Anthropic: Rivals refuse to hold hands at India AI Impact Summit

UMA KANNAN
NEW DELHI, DHNS

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman and Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei on Thursday appeared to deliberately avoid holding hands in a group photo at the India AI Impact Summit. However, talking about the awkward moment, Altman later said he did not know what he was supposed to do. "I was sort of confused," he added.

But there has been a rivalry between the two biggest AI companies for some time now.

Recently, Altman criticised Anthropic over its recent Super Bowl advertisement. On X, he said, "The good part of the Anthropic ads: they are funny, and I laughed."

"But I wonder why Anthropic would go for something so clearly dishonest. Our most important principle for ads says that we won't do exactly this; we would obviously never run ads in the way Anthropic depicts them. We are not stupid and we know our users would reject that," he said.

He said Anthropic wants to control what people do with AI — they block companies they don't like from using their coding product (including us), they want to write the rules themselves for what people can and can't use AI for, and now they also want to tell other companies what their business models can be.

Amodei co-founded Anthropic in 2021, after leaving OpenAI. He was the vice-president of OpenAI, but left due to disagreements over AI development and safety.

Anthropic raised $30 billion in a funding round at a $380 billion post-money valuation recently. The company's valuation has doubled in just five months. Anthropic said the investment will help deepen its research, continue to innovate in products, and ensure it has the resources to power infrastructure expansion.

The company's rival, OpenAI, has the largest tech fundraising round so far. In March last year, it closed a $41 billion round — this includes a $30-billion contribution from SoftBank.

At the summit, Amodei spoke about the rapid evolution of AI, the challenge of diffusion at population scale, and the balance between innovation, democratic guardrails, and inclusive growth.

He highlighted the gap between technological progress and societal impact. "There is a duality between the fundamental capabilities of the technology and the time it takes for those capabilities to diffuse into the world. In the Global South, the benefits of AI may be even larger than anywhere else, but that makes it even more important that we get safety, democratic governance and economic inclusion right," he said.

Files row: Gates doesn't deliver keynote at AI Impact Summit

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Bill Gates did not deliver a keynote at the India AI Impact Summit on Thursday, days after the Gates Foundation insisted that the Microsoft co-founder will go ahead with plans amid rising furore over the Epstein Files. Instead, the Foundation was represented by Ankur Vora, President of Africa and India Offices.

"After careful consideration, and to ensure the focus remains on the AI Summit's key priorities, Mr. Gates will not be delivering his keynote address," it said in a post on X. The Foundation remains fully committed to its work in India to advance shared health and development goals, it added.

On Tuesday, Gates' participation at the summit became a subject of speculation, after government sources claimed that he would not attend. The Foundation had then contradicted the reports, saying he would indeed deliver the keynote at 11.50 am on Thursday.

The Modi government faced criticism from the Opposition and on social media over the episode with the Congress asking whether PM Narendra Modi was "scared" of the American because of the Epstein Files.

Asked about Gates' attendance, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw was evasive, saying, "I forgot (like) many other things, regarding who's attending, who's not attending... That is personal choices which people make... I need not comment on that."

Google CEO Sundar Pichai visits the Coffee Board stall at the India AI Impact Summit on Thursday. PHOTO: X

Google's Pichai sips a cuppa at the Coffee Board stall

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Google CEO Sundar Pichai on Thursday visited the Commerce Ministry's Coffee Board stall at the AI Impact Summit here.

"When @SundarPichai drops by for a sip, you know it's truly worth it! The world is raising a cup to Bharat GI Coffee at #IndiaAIImpactSummit2026," Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said in a social media post.

Savouring Malabar Arabica, Pichai interacted with baristas and experienced the flavours of India's premium GI-tagged coffees.

OpenAI to open office in Bengaluru

CEO Altman says democratisation of AI fair, safe path

UMA KANNAN
NEW DELHI, DHNS

After Anthropic, AI research major OpenAI is slated to open its offices in Bengaluru and Mumbai later this year. The company already has a presence in New Delhi.

The announcement comes days after Anthropic opened an office in Bengaluru. "India is already leading the way in AI adoption, and with its homegrown tech talent, optimism about what AI can do for the country, and strong government support, it is well-placed to help shape its future and how democratic AI is adopted at scale," OpenAI CEO Sam Altman said.

At the India AI Impact Summit 2026 here, the company launched OpenAI for India, an initiative with leading Indian partners to expand access to AI.

"Through OpenAI for India, we're working together to build the infrastructure, skills, and local partnerships needed to build AI with India, for India, and in India," Altman said.

On Thursday, Tata Group, Tata Consultancy Services and OpenAI announced a multi-dimensional strategic partnership that will drive AI-powered innovation across enterprise, consumer, and social sectors.

Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran said, "This deep collaboration between OpenAI and the Tata Group marks a major milestone in India's vision to become a global leader in AI. Together we will skill India's youth and empower them to succeed in the AI era."

JioHotstar too announced its partnership with OpenAI. It will launch ChatGPT-branded Conversational Streaming in India. Using OpenAI APIs, the voice and text interface will allow users to explore India's largest streaming library through natural language conversations in multiple languages.

Earlier, speaking at the Summit, Altman said India is well-positioned to lead in AI, not just to build it, but to shape it, and decide what our future is going to look like. "It is important to move quickly," he said, adding India has made its mission to put AI to work for more people in more parts of the country.

India's leadership in sovereign AI, building on infrastructure, SLMs and much more has been great to watch, he said. The country is now home to more than 100 million weekly ChatGPT users, from students and teachers to developers and entrepreneurs.

The OpenAI CEO added that India is the fastest growing market for Codex, its coding agent that works to help people develop software faster and better.

He said that democratisation of AI is the only fair and safe path forward. "Democratisation of AI is the best way to ensure that humanity flourishes," Altman said, adding that the world urgently needs AI regulation.

The OpenAI CEO said there would be some disruption in jobs due to AI. "Technology always disrupts jobs, we always find new and better things to do," he said.

Technocrats flag AI backlash risk unless its benefits are 'useful'

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Technocrats and industry leaders have cautioned that advancement of AI could trigger a backlash, unless its benefits are useful to society.

Nandan Nilekani

At a fireside chat with Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei at the summit, Infosys Chairman Nandan Nilekani on Thursday said the stakeholders must accelerate efforts to ensure AI is applied for meaningful public good. Otherwise the resentment among white-collar workers could potentially derail the technology's progress.

Nilekani added that today there is a race to the top and bottom in the field of AI, and the race to the bottom is faster. "So, all of us, who have a stake in AI being useful to humanity, have to accelerate and redouble our efforts to make the diffusion happen. Otherwise, the consequences are going to be very difficult. There is going to be a backlash," he explained.

He noted that AI's most-visible outcomes, like creating deepfakes, raising the price of power bills, etc could turn public sentiment against it.

Amodei said while AI adoption can boost growth, we need to ensure that AI systems are safe and predictable and autonomously behave in a way that's under human control.

Vianai Founder Vishal Sikka warned that autonomous swarms of agents could act recklessly without adequate safeguards—an issue that must be addressed much like nuclear safety frameworks were developed over decades.

Google CEO Sundar Pichai said the government must serve as both regulators and innovators — bringing AI into public services while setting clear guardrails.

Puravankara's new project

BENGALURU, DHNS: Puravankara Limited has launched Purva Silversky, a premium residential development in Hebbagodi, Electronics City, Bengaluru. Spread across approx. 6.99 acres, the project comprises 356 exclusive residences across three iconic 32-storey towers. The project offers nearly 88% open-to-sky spaces.

The development features 3, 4 & 5 BHK residences, along with select larger-format homes, with unit sizes ranging from 1,864 sq ft to over 5,300 sq ft. Homes are priced at Rs 12,100+ per sq ft (excluding statutory and other charges).

EY India launches AI studio

BENGALURU, DHNS: EY India has launched EY.ai Generative Studio, a next-gen AI platform that helps enterprises adopt agentic AI and move from idea to enterprise-grade deployment up to 10x faster. It enables secure, governed and scalable innovation across diverse enterprise data environments.

The Studio comes with a suite of pre-trained industry models, pre-packaged templates, persona libraries and agent workflows.

Sensex tumbles 1,236 pts, Nifty tanks 365 pts amid escalating geopolitical tensions

MUMBAI, PTI

Benchmark Sensex tumbled 1,236 points or 1.5%, while Nifty closed near 25,450 on Thursday, following an across-the-board sell-off amid escalating geopolitical tensions between the US and Iran.

Halting the three-day gaining streak, the 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 1,236.11 points, or 1.48%, to settle at 82,498.14. The 50-share NSE Nifty slumped 365 points, or 1.41%, to close at 25,454.35.

Among the Sensex constituents, IndiGo, Mahindra & Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, Trent, Bharat Electronics Ltd, Adani Ports, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Reliance Industries, Tech Mahindra, ITC, Eternal and PowerGrid were the major laggards. "The bears took charge of the Indian market as rising geopolitical tensions between the US and Iran unsettled global sentiment, leading to a broad-based sell-off," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Ltd, said.

He added that Brent crude surged to its year-to-date high, exacerbating inflationary concerns and triggering heightened market volatility due to the fear of the bottlenecking of the Strait of Hormuz.

"At the same time, uncertainty surrounding the Fed's rate-cut trajectory and continued weakness in the INR impacted the domestic market. Sell-off intensified due to low FII participation because of Lunar New Year holiday across key Asian markets and a non-settlement day on account of a regional banking holiday in India," Nair said.

Brent Crude rises 1%

Meanwhile, Brent Crude, the global oil benchmark, rose 1.02% to $71.07 per barrel.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi settled 3% higher, while Japan's Nikkei 225 benchmark closed 1% higher. Markets in Hong Kong and mainland China remained closed for the Lunar New Year holidays. European markets are trading lower in mid-session deals. The US equities market closed in the green territory on Wednesday.

FIs bought equities worth Rs 1,154.34 crore on Wednesday, while DIIs were also net buyers of stocks worth Rs 440.34 crore, data showed.

Kharge holds talks with Anthropic leadership

BENGALURU, DHNS: IT/BT and RDPR Minister Priyank Kharge on Thursday held a series of high-level meetings with global technology leaders and innovation ecosystem partners in New Delhi, with a strong focus on deepening collaboration in AI, emerging technologies, and next-generation innovation ecosystems.

A key highlight of the day was the meeting with Dario Amodei, Co-founder and CEO of Anthropic, along with Irina Ghose, India Managing Director, and Rahul Patil, CTO. The discussions centred on responsible AI development, digital governance, data sovereignty, and building stronger support systems for AI startups and developers as part of Karnataka's push to strengthen its deep-tech and innovation ecosystem.

Priyank Kharge, Minister of IT/BT (right); with Dario Amodei, Co-founder and CEO of Anthropic (centre); Irina Ghose, India Managing Director; and Rahul Patil, CTO, at the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi on Thursday.

"It was wonderful catching up with Dario Amodei, Irina Ghose and Rahul Patil to discuss deeper collaboration in AI. Responsible AI, digital governance, data sovereignty, and a focused approach to skilling, incubation and innovation support for startups and developers were central to our discussion. It was encouraging to hear about Anthropic's plans for its Bengaluru office, and we look forward to working closely as we build a responsible and globally competitive AI and deep-tech ecosystem together," Kharge said.

India to begin production of rare earth permanent magnets this year, says Kishan Reddy

NEW DELHI, PTI: Union Coal and Mines Minister G Kishan Reddy on Thursday said India will begin production of Rare Earth Permanent Magnets (REPMs) this year, marking a key step towards self-reliance in critical minerals for electric vehicles and renewable energy sectors.

Speaking at a conference organised by FICCI and Ministry of Mines, Reddy highlighted the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative to reduce import dependence on rare earth elements. "In this year itself, permanent magnets production will begin in India," Reddy asserted.

The announcement comes amid India's focus on securing supplies of neodymium, praseodymium and other rare earths, with the Mines Ministry auctioning exploration blocks and approving recycling facilities.

India faces a shortage of processing units for critical minerals and processing remains a key challenge. To address this, the government has identified four states — Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Maharashtra, and Gujarat — for establishing Critical Mineral Processing Plant Parks, the minister said.

The Gujarat government has already begun work, and AP is ready to proceed. "I will soon meet the CMs of Odisha and Maharashtra to discuss setting up these plants," Reddy said.

Breaking dependency

Building a complete value-added chain is essential, otherwise India will remain import-dependent for processed critical minerals, he explained.

India is taking decisive steps toward self-reliance by establishing a domestic ecosystem for high-performance REPMs. To support this goal, the government approved a Rs 7,280-crore scheme to develop 6,000 mT per annum of integrated REPM manufacturing capacity in November 2025.

IN BRIEF

Kishan settles for 2nd place in chess Nationals

▶ Eight-time national champion Kishan Gangolli from Karnataka finished second in the 19th AICFB National Chess Championship for the visually challenged, held at the Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences in Bengaluru, reports DHNS.

The nine-round Swiss league tournament featured 49 players from 13 states. After an intense final round, five players were tied on 6.5 points. With superior tie-break scores, Somendra secured first place while Rithvik Marri finished third.

Victoria Cross for Calorific Cup

KOLKATA SELECTIONS

Victoria Cross, from the stables of Neil Darashah and to be ridden by Suraj Narredu, is fancied to win the Calorific Cup, the feature event of the races to be run over a sprint on Friday. The first race starts at 2:30 pm.

1. Agostini Handicap -1400M: Lineupandcollect 1, Upper Steert 2, Happy Morning 3.
2. Pa Bear Plate - 1200M: Argento 1, Fifty Shades 2, Knotty Ash 3.
3. Royal Blue Star Handicap (Div I) - 1200M: Live It Love It 1, Schoenberg 2, Spirit Bay 3.
4. Royal Blue Star Handicap (Div II) - 1200M: Contessina 1, Anata Sukha 2, Elusive Ranger 3.
5. Calorific Cup - 1100M: Victoria Cross 1, Morano 2, Outlander 3.
6. Captain Courageous Handicap - 1600M: Mrs Brando 1, Amaze And Inspire 2, Paulite Warrior 3.
Day's best: Contessina. **Jackpot:** 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. **I treble:** 1, 2, 3. **II treble:** 4, 5, 6.

◆ ON TV ◆

CRICKET

T20 WC: Australia vs Oman **(7 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network**, **JioHotstar**.

Women's Asia Cup Rising Stars: India A vs Sri Lanka A **(semi-finals, 8 am)**, Bangladesh A vs Pakistan A **(12:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network**, **SonyLIV**.

FOOTBALL

ISL: FC Goa vs Mohammedan SC **(7:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Ten 2, FanCode**.

TENNIS

ATP 500: Rio Open **(quarterfinals, 12:30 am, Saturday)**. **LIVE** on **FanCode**.

ATP 500: Qatar Open **(semifinals, 3 pm)**. **LIVE** on **FanCode**.

FORMULA 1

Pre-Season Testing: Day 3 **(12:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **FanCode**.

OTHERS

Winter Olympics: Day 14 **(1:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **JioHotstar**.

FOOTBALL ROUND-UP

Bodo stun Italian giants Inter

Gordon nets four in Newcastle rout; Atletico held at Brugge

PARIS, AFP

Norway's Bodo/Glimt stunned Inter Milan in the Champions League on Wednesday, beating last season's runners-up 3-1 in the first leg of their knockout phase play-off tie after Anthony Gordon scored four as Newcastle United hammered Qarabag 6-1 in Azerbaijan.

Elsewhere Atletico Madrid were held by Club Brugge in a thrilling 3-3 draw, while Bayer Leverkusen took a big step towards reaching the last 16 by beating Olympiacos 2-0 away in Greece.

Bodo/Glimt, Norwegian champions in four of the last six years, made it to this stage after some impressive results during the league phase, including wins at home to Manchester City and away to Atletico in their last two games.

The club from north of the Arctic Circle were therefore not afraid of the current Serie A leaders and went in front on 20 minutes through Sondre Brunstad Fet. Francesco Pio Esposito equalised on the half-hour mark for three-time European champions Inter, the goal standing after a VAR check despite an apparent handball in the build-up.

However, Bodo/Glimt went back in front just after the hour when Kasper Hogh's brilliant lay-off set up Jens Petter Hauge to score, and Hogh found the net himself three minutes later.

The result leaves Inter, who lost 5-0 to PSG in last season's Champions League final, facing a big challenge to overturn their two-goal deficit in next Tuesday's return leg at San Siro.

The winners of the tie will play either Manchester City or Sporting of Portugal in the last 16 next month.

Newcastle made short work of Qarabag on their long trip to Baku, with the outstanding Gordon netting two penalties among his four goals on the night -- he now has 10 goals in nine matches in this season's Champions League, a tally bettered only by Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappe on 13.

Gordon's clinical finish gave Newcastle a third-minute lead at the Tofiq Bahramov Republican Stadium, and Malick Thiaw headed in for 2-0 after just eight minutes.

Former Everton winger Gordon then converted a penalty awarded for a handball just after the half-hour mark, and pounced on poor defending a minute later to complete his first professional hat-trick.

He then added a penalty for his fourth and his team's fifth in first-half stoppage time, with Jacob Murphy getting the visitors' sixth in the second half after Elvin Jafarguliyev had pulled one back.

Next week's return at St James' Park should now be a mere formality, with a last-16 tie to come against Barcelona or Chelsea.

Results: Knockout phase play-offs (first leg): Bodo/Glimt: 3 (Brunstad Fet 20th, Hauge 61st, Hogh 64th) bt Inter Milan: 1 (Esposito 30th).Qarabag: 1 (Jafarguliyev 55th) lt to Newcastle: 6 (Gordon 3rd, 32nd P, 34th, 45+1 P, Thiaw 8th, Murphy 72nd); Brugge: 3 (Onyedika 52nd, Tresoldi 60th, Tzolis 89th) drew with Atletico Madrid: 3 (Alvarez 8th P, Lookman 45+4, Ordonez 79th OG); Olympiacos: 0 lt to Bayer Leverkusen: 2 (Schick 60th, 63rd).

Bodo/Glimt's forward Jens Petter Hauge celebrates by kicking the corner flag after scoring against Inter Milan at Aspmyra Stadium in Bodo on Wednesday night. AFP

Real submit evidence in racism probe

Real Madrid said it had provided "all available evidence" to UEFA on Thursday in support of their Brazilian star Vinicius Junior's complaint of racist abuse during this week's Champions League clash at Benfica, reports AFP from Madrid.

Tuesday's first leg of the knockout phase play-off tie in Lisbon was stopped for 10 minutes after Vinicius told the referee Benfica's Gianluca Prestianni had called him a "monkey" during a confrontation. UEFA announced on Wednesday it would investigate "allegations of discriminatory behaviour".

Arsenal fumble to damaging draw against Wolves

WOLVERHAMPTON, AFP: Arsenal's Premier League title challenge suffered a major blow as they squandered a two-goal lead and conceded a stoppage-time equaliser in a damaging 2-2 draw at rock-bottom Wolves on Wednesday.

Mikel Arteta's side were on course to move seven points clear at the top after Bukayo Saka's early opener and Piero Hincapie's second-half strike put them in control at Molineux.

But Arsenal collapsed in the closing stages as Hugo Bueno (**in pic**) reduced the deficit before Riccardo Calafiori turned Tom Edozie's shot into his own net in the final seconds after a mix-up between goalkeeper David Raya and centre-back Gabriel Magalhaes, to leave the visitors shell-shocked.

Result: Wolves: 2 (Bueno 61st, Calafiori 90th+4 og) drew with Arsenal: 2 (Saka 5th, Hincapie 56th).

Villarreal win

Villarreal edged past Levante 1-0 on Wednesday in La Liga to open up a three-point gap above Atletico Madrid as they look to consolidate third place, reports AFP from Valencia

Marcelino Garcia Toral's side capitalised on fourth-place Atletico's heavy defeat by Rayo Vallecano last weekend thanks to Georges Mikautadze's 57th minute goal.

Result: Levante: 0 lt to Villarreal: 1 (Mikautadze 57th).

DYES players left in the lurch by administrators

State govt outfit continues to field under-strength side

ADITYA K HALDER
BENGALURU, DHNS

A week after fielding just 10 players, and in the absence of their entire coaching staff, the Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports Football Club (DYES FC) continued the same negligence in a 0-9 drubbing by BTM FC in the BDFA A Division League Championship at the BFS here on Thursday.

DH reported on February 11 that DYES FC fielded 10 players in a 0-11 loss to table toppers Stride Sports FC while their head coach Shanthi S was absent along with her support staff. The team did show up with a full squad for the next match (0-8 loss to Income Tax) on Feb 13 but it was again a no-show by the coach.

The 10 players, who showed up for the love of the game, travelled early morning over 300 kms from Bellary for the afternoon kick-off and were provided with no food and water during their journey. While some missed the match due to their ongoing PU exams, many decided not to travel due to the continued absence of the coaching staff as they feel the team is not serious about playing.

Footballers' woes

Adding to travelling players' woes, they had no choice but to play the entire 90 minutes and had nobody to fetch them water during the water breaks and halftime. Bangalore District Football Association (BDFA) officials, who have other jobs to handle, had to help them instead.

The team has now dropped into the relegation zone with just 7 points in 13 games and must win their last match against Roots FS to avoid demotion to the B division.

It's worth noting that the organisers, BDFA — which falls under the Karnataka State Football Association (KSFA) — can't be faulted for letting DYES play as a team is allowed to play as long as they field a minimum of seven players on the field at kick-off, as per FIFA and the International Football Association Board (IFAB).

A senior KSFA official, meanwhile, expressed his concern about the incident, saying DYES FC have been habitually negligent.

LOCAL FOOTBALL

"It's unfortunate for a government team but they are the team who are always behind schedule," said the official. "They will not renew the affiliation on time, they will not field the team on time, they will not complete the CSR registration on time as well."

Neither the calls nor the text messages elicit any response from head coach Shanthi on her absence.

However, DYES commissioner Chethan R confirmed that they were taking action against the coach and added that the team would field a complete squad for the next match.

Results: A Division: BTM FC: 9 (Sochan Shatsang 8th, 10th, 11th, 15th, 65th, Subhesh K 42nd, Devaraj J 44th, Dhanesh Vasanth 71st, Mohammad Gurfan 90th) bt DYES FC: 0; Bangalore Eagles FC: 1 (Rechans Shimrah 28th) drew with AGORC FC: 1 (P Kiran Raj 54th).
B Division: Group A: Empire FC: 3 (MangkhoLet Haokip 52nd, Muhammad Ijas M 39th, Sanjeev Noronha 55th) bt Al Fateh FC: 0; Pillanna Garden FC: 1 (Gasper Anthony 8th) bt Vehicles FC: 0.

Spain's Oriol Coll reacts after winning the men's sprint final of ski mountaineering in Bormio on Thursday. REUTERS

Oriol, Marianne etch their names to Winter Olympics' history

BORMIO (ITALY), AFP

Spain's Oriol Cardona Coll and Switzerland's Marianne Fatton bagged the first two Olympic golds on offer in ski mountaineering here on Thursday in the event's debut at the Winter Games.

The men's sprint also saw Russian Nikita Filippov win the first medal at the Milan-Cortina Games for individual neutral athletes when he claimed silver.

Meanwhile, Japanese teenager Ami Nakai goes for a shock Olympic gold in women's figure skating. Nakai, 17, set the pace in the short programme on Tuesday, upstaging teammate Kaori Sakamoto, a three-time Olympic medallist.

The 25-year-old Sakamoto is saying goodbye to the sport and would dearly love to end her career by topping the podium at the Milano Ice Skating Arena.

In the men's sprint, Filippov finished 1.52sec off Cardona Coll, who won in 2min 34.03sec for Spain's first Winter Olympic gold since Francisco Fernandez Ochoa won the men's alpine skiing slalom at the 1972 Games in Sapporo, Japan.

Thibault Anselmet of France took bronze (+2.31) in the skimo sprint, an adrenaline-packed event requiring athletes to negotiate uphill climbs on ski and foot before descending by ski.

The Swiss pair of Arno Lietha and Jon Kistler had led up the initial gruelling 65-metre climb in heavy snow in northern Italy.

But Cardona Coll showed all his experience to fight back and surge into the lead in an astonishing display of stamina and technical nous on the opening transition.

BENGALURU SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT LIMITED
Office of the Deputy General Manager-1 (BSWML), 1st Floor, BBMP Building, Thimmaiah Road, Bengaluru-560 052

No. DGM-1/BSWML/Qtn/1115/2025-26 Date: 19.02.2026

QUOTATION NOTIFICATION

The Deputy General Manager–1 invites Item Rate Quotations for the work detailed in the table below. Bidders may submit their quotations for the work mentioned therein. The quotation shall be submitted in a sealed cover to this office within the date and time specified. The quotations will be opened on the prescribed date and time.

Vehicle Description : 1) 60 MT Ton load cell cup and ball-6 No's. 2) 10 MM Steel Plate 3*1.5 Meter. 3) Software with DL and load cell wire-1 Job. 4) Installation Charges and labor work
Amount in Rs.

NOTE: Calendar of events: 1) Submission of quotation 20.02.2026 onwards. 2) Last date submission of quotations on or before 26.02.2026 upto 4.00 PM. 3) Date of opening of quotations on 27.02.2026 at 11.00 AM onwards. 4) Before submission of quotations, bidders must ensure that all the necessary Documents have been attached with quote.

Sd/-
Deputy General Manager-1, BSWML, Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/5738/CCL/2025-26

DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND SPORTS
State Youth Centre, Nrupathunga Road, Bangalore-560 001
Tel: (080) 22215601, 22213009, FAX: 080 22215602

No: DYES/AP/ES/282/2025-26 Date: 18.02.2026

Tender Notification (Through e- Procurement portal only)

The Assistasnt Executive Engineer, Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports, State Youth Centre , Nrupathunga Road, Bangalore-560 001, KARNATAKA INDIA invites Tender to take up the various works at Bangalore, Mysore, Mandya & Kodagudistricts, Karnataka through E-Procurement Portal.

Sl. No	Particulars	Amount put to Tender	EMD Amt.	Last Date &Time for Submission of Bid	Last Date &Time for Opening of technical bid
1	Construction and repairs of drain at kanteerava stadium, Bengaluru	Rs118.16 Lakhs	Rs. 2,00,000	04.03.2026 time 16.00 Hrs	05.03.2026 time 16.30 Hrs.
2	Installation of synthetic Hockey turf at Sri Jayaprakash Narayan National Youth Training Centre, Vidyanagar, Bengaluru	Rs.318.59 Lakhs	Rs. 4,77,885	06.03.2026 time 16.00 Hrs	07.03.2026 time 16.30 Hrs.
3	Construction of Volleyball and other sports courts at Sir.M. Visvesvaraya District Stadium, Mandya	Rs.56.82 Lakhs	Rs. 1,13,640	06.03.2026 time 16.00 Hrs	07.03.2026 time 16.30 Hrs.
4	Construction of Retaining wall and Pavilion for Hockey Ground, Somavarapete	Rs.94.68 Lakhs	Rs. 1,89,370	05.03.2026 time 16.00 Hrs	06.03.2026 time 16.30 Hrs.
5	Construction of a Changing room for the hockey stadium at chamundivihara district stadium Mysore, repair of the motor pump room and installation of a gate, arch, and cattle trap at the main entrance (Call-2)	Rs.83.16 Lakhs	Rs. 1,66,330	05.03.2026 time 16.00 Hrs	06.03.2026 time 16.30 Hrs.

The Tender shall be submitted through e-Procurement Portal **(https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in)**. Vendors need to register in the e-Procurement Portal to submit their bids online. The tender document can be viewed free of cost from the e-Procurement Portal. Additional information may be obtained during office hours at the above mentioned Address.

Sd/- Assistant Executive Engineer
Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports, Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/5755/SA/2025-26

BANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED
(Wholly Owned by Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
(CIN-U04010KA2002SGC030438)

TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through KPP portal)

BESCOM invites tender for the following

Enquiry No/ Indent No. BESCOM/2025-26/IND0193/Call-2
For Supply of DTC Maintenance Plates.

Enquiry No/Indent No. BESCOM/2025-26/ IND0194/Call-2
For Danger Boards.

For all the above Works: Bid documents available from **21-02-2026**. Last Date for submission of Bids on **07-03-2026** at **17:15** hrs. Opening of Bid Document on **09-03-2026** at **11:00** hrs. The Tenders can be obtained through KPP portal website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** Aspiring bidders need to register on KPP portal. Further Bidders can take assistance with KPPP help desk contact numbers (080-46010000, 080-68948777) or email at support@eprochelpdesk.com.

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Sd/-
Chief General Manager(Ele.,) Procurement, BESCOM

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
Minor Irrigation and Ground Water Development Department. Office of the Executive Engineer Minor Irrigation and Ground Water Development Department Division Koppal. Phone & Fax No : 08539-220054 email: eemidnkst@rediffmail.com

No:EE/MI&GWDD/Koppal/PB/TP/2025-26/5268
Dated:16/02/2026

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER

The Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation and Ground Water Development Department Division Koppal district invites tenders from the eligible tenderers registered civil contractors as per standard bid documents KW-4 on KPP portal for 13 no. of tender works pertaining to Koppal district & Raichur district The Approximate amount for the mentioned works Ranges between Rs.200.00 Lakhs to 970.00 Lakhs. Two cover tender procedure as per rule 28 of the KTTP act shall be followed.

For more information the contractor can contact the under signed during office hours and all information regarding tenders can be had from website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/ The tender documents can be downloaded from the above website address on or after **23-02-2026**. Last date & time for receipt of tender is **12-03-2026** time 17.30 hours, Pre bid meeting will be held on **03-03-2026**, 11.00 Hours at division office koppal, Date & time for opening of technical bid **13-03-2026** time 11.00 hours, date and time for opening of financial bid **16-03-2026** time 11.00 hours (If technical bid sanction is accorded by the competent authority).

Sd/-Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation and Ground Water Development Department Division Koppal.

DIPR/Koppal/692/KSMCA/2025-26

GREATER BENGALURU AUTHORITY
Office of the Deputy Conservator of Forests, Greater Bengaluru Authority, N R Square, Annexe Building - 3, Bengaluru-560 002

No: DCF/PR-681/2025-26 Date: 18-02-2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the notice of the Citizens of Bengaluru, that the Chief Engineer, Project and Road Asset Management Centre, PWD Building. Bengaluru has submitted an application and requested the Tree Officer/DCF, GBA for removal of trees standing inside the Joint Director, Office of Sericulture, inside their premises at Okalipuram, Bengaluru for construction of proposed Reshme Bhavan. The details are given below:

Name of the project	Construction of proposed Reshme Bhavan			
Name of the Agency	Project and Road Asset Management Centre, PWD, Bengaluru			
Purpose for removal of trees	The trees are standing at the premises of the Office of Department of Sericulture. Okalipuram, Bengaluru and coming within the project area of Construction of proposed Reshme Bhavan			
Description of the area with clear demarcation of boundaries or with GPS Coordinates	**Bou-ndary**	**Latitude (N)**	**Longitude (E)**	**Location**
	1	12'98'.23830	77°56'.45540	The trees are standing inside the premises of the Office of Department of Sericulture. Sy. Nos. 12, 14, 17, Muddenahalli, Okalipuram, Bengaluru
	2	12'98'.24420	77°56'.41810	
	3	12'98'.24710	77°56'.41030	
	4	12'98'.25400	77°56'.34760	
	5	12'98'.37900	77°56'.41300	
	6	12'98'.39330	77°56'.42410	
	7	12'98'.40230	77°56'.45890	
	8	12'98'.38660	77°56'.46840	
	9	12'98'.37600	77°56'.48010	
	10	12'98'.27600	77°56'.48990	
	11	12'98'.28430	77°56'.45970	
Enumeration of trees • Total No. of trees standing in the project area	628 Nos (Annexure 1)	Description of Trees, Species, Location, Area, etc., are uploaded in the website of GBA for information of all **(www.bbmp.gov.in)**		
Mode of communication of comments* *(Public can send their comments either by E-mail / Post / Hand)*	**Address:** a. The Deputy Conservator of Forests & Tree Officer, GBA, N.R. Sqaure, Bengaluru -02 **E-mail ID: dcfbbmp12@gmail.com** b. The Chief Engineer, PRAMC, Bengaluru **E-mail ID: eicpramc@gmail.com #** # A Copy of the Comments communicated directly to Chief Engineer, PRAMC, should also be marked to the Tree-Officer/ DCF, GBA			
Deadline for Filling Objections	Ten (10) days from the date of publication of this notification in Newspaper ***Objections/Comments/Suggestions should be relevant and specific to the project**			

In view of the above, the suggestions/objections/comments are invited from citizens under Section 8 (3) (vii) of the Karnataka Preservation of Tree Act, 1976.

Sd/- Tree Officer
& Deputy Conservator of Forests, GBA Bengaluru

India are playing fabulous cricket, says Mhambrey

MUMBAI, PTI: Former bowling coach Paras Mhambrey on Thursday said it is not just about winning, but how the team wins, pointing out that India's four straight victories in the T20 World Cup have been impressive, with four different players earning the Player of the Match awards, highlighting the squad's depth and teamwork.

India topped Group A with four straight wins to storm into the Super Eights, and Mhambrey said the challenges encountered so far would stand the team in good stead heading into the crucial phase of the tournament.

"One bit is just the way the Indian team is playing. Just the kind of cricket they're playing, I think it's fabulous," Mhambrey said at the launch of the MI Junior Season 6 here at the MCA-BKC Ground. "Purely the skill-set they've shown in terms of...one is winning and the way you win. For us, it's not about the winning bit -- that I'm not that surprised -- it's just the way we've won these games," he said.

Mhambrey said India have faced a few challenging moments in the tournament, experiences he believes will keep the players alert and better prepared for the tougher tests ahead.

Mhambrey cited Australia's loss to Zimbabwe and said at no point can a top team take it easy.

"If you let your guard down, if you're not up there (at the) top of your game."

Everyone loves an underdog story: Raza

COLOMBO, PTI: Skipper Sikandar Raza said Zimbabwe's wonder run in the T20 World Cup group stages has earned his side respect from everyone, and hoped to recreate the universally loved underdog's victory story in the Super Eights against tough opponents.

The Africans showed a glimpse of their ability to spring surprises, while sweeping aside Australia and Sri Lanka in Group B matches here.

"We keep our sights forward. If I keep our eyes on the present...I don't think anyone gave us a chance. To win everyone's hearts and respect, it is a good position to be in," Raza said in the post-match presentation.

Now, Raza has set his eyes on the Super Eights where they will come across reigning champions India, two-time champions West Indies and 2024 finalists South Africa.

"We take one game at a time. We arrive on the 21st, and then train on the 22nd, and then it is show-time. Whatever happens, happens. If we can win two out of three games, who knows what can happen. Everyone loves an underdog story."

CRICKET

DUBE MAKES HIMSELF INDISPENSABLE

Mumbaikar's comfort against pace adds cutting edge to his game

SIDNEY KIRAN
AHMEDABAD, DHNS

Ishan Kishan's resurrection from the depths of despair is not the only fairytale that's been written this season by an Indian cricketer. Shivam Dube, a genial giant built with plenty of heart and character, is steadily scripting his own redemption story that's earning plaudits with every performance.

Just 20 months ago, in the previous edition of the ICC T20 World Cup in the Americas, Dube was perhaps the most pilloried person in the team. First, the all-rounder's selection for the marquee event was questioned, considering his inability to dominate fast bowlers, especially if they banged it short. Despite the southpaw coming on the back of an impressive outing with the Chennai Super Kings, where he scored 396 runs at a good strike rate of 162.29, pundits felt a game-changer like Rinku Singh would have been better equipped for the finisher role.

When you're under the microscope even before the tournament could start, things can be tough, and the 32-year-old struggled to make an impact. Although a vast majority of the star-studded India batting line-up found the going tough on the undercooked pitches in the Americas, it was the Mumbaikar's failures that were magnified. Calls kept growing for his axing from the playing XI with every bad outing, but then skipper Rohit Sharma and head coach Rahul Dravid stood by Dube.

Dube, who had accrued only 106 runs in 7 games, repaid that faith with a game-changing performance in the final against South Africa, where his 16-ball 27 provided the impetus the Indian innings needed after a tough take-off and turbulent middle phase. That somewhat offset all preceding criticism, but Dube knew that to play the next World Cup at home, he had to reinvent himself or risk being sidelined.

He had to change the notion that he was just a bully of spin bowling. With his assigned role primarily as that of a finisher, he had to up his game against fast bowling — something that he would face more often at the death — which was his weakness. Although he tipped the scales at 6'4", he was often found wanting when pacers hurled the ball above his chest and/or at great speed.

So, Dube reached out to Praveen Amre, knock for his tachnical acumen and who first spotted the southapaw during an Air India trial. Amre, who helped Shreyas Iyer tackle his short-ball troubles and several other batters, quickly figured out what the problem was with Dube — his side-on stance. Amre advised him to have a more open stance that would give him more room, and the results are there to be seen. Dube also worked hard on his fitness, shedding flab and gaining muscles.

During the New Zealand series just before the World Cup, a ripped Dube unleashed the new side of him, where he looked completely at ease against the pace trio of Matt Henry, Jacob Duffy and Zak Foulkes. In the fourth T20I, he played the most sensational innings of his career, smashing 65 off 23 balls, a knock that saw seven monstrous sixes.

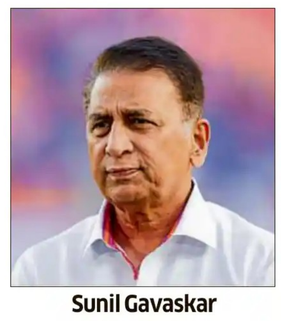
That newfound confidence has been visible in this World Cup too, where he has played three vital knocks in four games, including a Player of the Match 31-ball 66 against the Netherlands here on Wednesday. He has maintained his potency against spin bowling, where his extra reach gives him an advantage, but his improved firepower versus pacers has turned him into a destructive force. He has become an indispensable member of the side, much like Pandya.

"When I came to CSK (in 2022), there was something I was struggling with," said Dube at the post-match press conference.

"And yes, in that season, I got some runs. But it was important for me to come back strong in the next season because I knew that I could dominate in the IPL and international cricket as well. So in that off-season, I worked really hard towards the short ball. I knew that it's not easy. I worked really hard, but there is something called support that is given by Surya (captain Suryakumar Yadav) and (head coach) Gautam (Gambhir). So they have given me a free hand. They trust me a lot."

Like how Dube repaid the trust of the previous management in the big clash, he is doing the same for the current dispensation from the start itself. He'll be hoping to do the same in the business end starting Sunday for India.

Shivam Dube's blistering 66 against the Netherlands on Wednesday once again underlined the southpaw's growing influence in the lower middle-order. PTI



Sunil Gavaskar

Stop playing big shots across the line initially: SMG to Abhishek

AHMEDABAD, PTI: The legendary Sunil Gavaskar believes Abhishek Sharma is struggling to cope with the weight of expectations in the ongoing T20 World Cup and wants the big-hitting opener to avoid playing across the line at the start of his innings.

Entering the tournament as the top-ranked T20I batter, Abhishek is experiencing a significant slump in form, having registered three consecutive ducks.

"Abhishek Sharma is a lovely guy, but expectations seem to be weighing on him. If he had started well against USA, it would have been different. Now, the pressure of being the big six-hitter and top batter is showing.

"With his shot range, he needs to spend time in the middle. He cannot try to hit a boundary or six on the first ball of his innings. If the big shots come, fine. But he shouldn't force himself to play the big shots across the line," Gavaskar said on Star Sports. Abhishek is yet to score a run in his maiden ICC event, having played against the USA, Pakistan and Netherlands. Gavaskar said the 25-year-old left-hander needs to play smart cricket at the start of his innings.

"Take a single and get off the mark. Even four dot balls don't matter."

In-form Zimbabwe enter Super 8s unbeaten

Bennett, Raza steer African side to six-wicket win over Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, PTI

Sikandar Raza scored a 26-ball 45 to help Zimbabwe to a facile six-wicket victory over Sri Lanka in Colombo. AFP

Brian Bennett's measured fifty and Sikandar Raza's raw power propelled Zimbabwe to a facile six-wicket win over a fancied Sri Lanka as the Africans entered the Super Eights of the T20 World Cup with a clean slate, here on Thursday.

Chasing 179 on a rather sluggish surface, Zimbabwe needed pragmatism and force in equal measure, and those elements were offered to them by Bennett (63 not out, 48 balls) and Raza (45, 26b) respectively.

Zimbabwe scaled down the target in 19.3 overs.

Both the teams have already entered the Super Eights from Group B, and African outfit can be proud their show in the group phase as they also had defeated Australia in an earlier match.

The African side started quite well, reaching 55 for no loss in the Power Play segment, thanks to openers Bennett and Tadi Marumani (34, 26b).

In all, they added 69 runs for the first wicket in 8.3 overs before Marumani fell to Dunith Wellalage, offering the left-arm spinner a return catch.

Ryan Burl ensured that Zimbabwe did not lose the initial momentum, making a quick 12-23 and the highlight was a massive 103-meter six off Wellalage over long-on.

Burl perished to a slower bouncer by pacer Dasun Shanaka but the arrival of Raza changed the complexion of the match.

Bennett reached his fifty in 41 balls but Zimbabwe needed some muscle in their chase.

Raza pummelled pacer Dilshan Madushanka for two sixes in a row, followed by a four in the 15th over to give his side some steam.

The skipper, who suffered cramps in the later part of his innings, then clouted a six and four off spinner Maheesh Theekshana in the 16th over as Zimbabwe brought down the asking rate to 6.5.

Raza was ousted by Dushan Hemantha in the 19th over, and they lost Tashinga Musekiwa two balls later, leaving the visitors to score 8 off the last over.

But a huge pulled six by Tony Munyonga off Theekshana erased all the worries in the Zimbabwe camp. Earlier, SL batters struggled against Zimbabwe spinners in the middle overs on a slow pitch, but reached a par 178 for seven.

Brief scores: Sri Lanka: 178/7 in 20 overs (Pathum Nissanka 62, Pavan Rathnayake 44; Blessing Muzarabani 2-38, Brad Evans 2-35, Graeme Cremer 2-27) lt to Zimbabwe: 182/4 in 19.3 overs (Brian Bennett 63 n.o., Tadiwanashe Marumani 34, Sikandar Raza 45; Dushan Hemantha 2-36).
Result: Zimbabwe won by 6 wickets.
PoM: Sikandar Raza.

CA to conduct forensic review

MELBOURNE, PTI

Mitchell Marsh

Former champions Australia are set to conduct a "forensic review" of their disappointing T20 World Cup campaign after the injury-ravaged team crashed out in the group stage of the ongoing event being co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka.

The 2021 champions exited after losing to Sri Lanka and minnows Zimbabwe. They still have one match remaining against Oman in Pallekele on Friday, but that would be inconsequential.

Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka have progressed to the Super Eights as Australia failed to get past the group stage for the first time since 2009.

Selector Tony Dodemaide said a full review of the performance would be done once the players are back home.

"It's really disappointing the way the tournament has rolled out," Dodemaide was quoted as saying by cricket.com.au. "But we will need some time, and take some time, once we finish our last commitment – it's important that we finish strongly on Friday against Oman – then we'll get back and analyse it fully."

The team was without its front-line pace attack after injuries forced Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood to skip the tournament, while Mitchell Starc announced his international retirement from the format.

The team then lost captain Mitchell Marsh, also to injury, during the tournament, disturbing its balance.

Australia look to end forgettable campaign on a positive note

PALLEKELE, PTI: Australia will look to end one of their most calamitous World Cup campaigns on a positive note when they meet minnows Oman in their inconsequential final outing of this year's T20 showpiece here on Friday.

Australia were eliminated in the group stage after Tuesday's game between Zimbabwe and Ireland in Kandy was washed out, which paved the way for the much-improved African side's entry into the Super Eights from Group B along with tournament co-hosts Sri Lanka.

Australia showed glimpses of their batting prowess in the first half of their innings in the loss against Sri Lanka, but it was their shock defeat to Zimbabwe that really blew their campaign apart. The forgettable campaign was marked by injuries and selection calls.

LIVE 7:00 PM

Afghanistan bow out on a high

CHENNAI, PTI

Ibrahim Zadran

Ibrahim Zadran struck a fluent unbeaten 95 while Mohammed Nabi took four wickets for just seven runs as Afghanistan signed off from the T20 World Cup with a comprehensive 82-run victory over Canada, here Thursday.

Canada signed off without a win from the tournament while Afghanistan had their second win.

The Rashid-Khan led side was clearly the better team and had it won the cliffhanger against South Africa, the side would have avoided an early elimination.

In a battle of pride between two already-eliminated sides, Afghanistan rode on a blazing unbeaten knock from Zadran to post a formidable 200 for four and then restricted Canada to 118 for 8 to seal an emphatic win.

With both teams aiming to return home on a high, Afghanistan produced a commanding batting effort after being sent in to bat.

Canada's chase never really gathered momentum after captain Dilpreet Bajwa's brief 13 off seven ended in the third over.

They slipped to 33 for three inside six overs, with Mohammad Nabi striking crucial blows, including the wickets of Yuvraj Samra (17) and Nicholas Kirton (10).

Off-spinner Mujeeb Ur Rahman removed Bajwa, while Azmatullah Omarzai accounted for Navneet Dhaliwal as Afghanistan tightened the screws early.

Harsh Thaker (30) and Saad Bin Zafar (28) attempted a repair job with a 53-run stand for the sixth wicket, but Afghanistan's spin duo ensured there was no comeback.

Nabi returned remarkable figures of 4 for 7 in four overs, while skipper Rashid Khan chipped in with two wickets.

With wickets falling at regular intervals and the required run rate soaring, Canada folded meekly to hand Afghanistan a comprehensive win to close their campaign.

Earlier, Zadran rode on a spilled catch to punish the Canada bowlers with seven fours and five sixes, leading Afghanistan to a big total.

Brief scores: Afghanistan: 200/4 in 20 overs (Rahmanullah Gurbaz 30, Ibrahim Zadran 95, Sediqullah Atal 44; Jaskaran Singh 3-52) bt Canada: 118/8 in 20 overs (Harsh Thaker 30, Saad Bin Zafar 28; Mohammad Nabi 4-7, Rashid Khan 2-19).
Result: Afghanistan won by 82 runs.
PoM: Ibrahim Zadran.

WI march on with a clean slate

KOLKATA, PTI

Shai Hope

Skipper Shai Hope's second consecutive fifty and a disciplined performance by bowlers powered West Indies to a comfortable 42-run victory over Italy, ensuring that the Caribbeans finished their group stage campaign unbeaten in the T20 World Cup here on Thursday.

Despite a shaky batting performance, the Caribbean pace and spin attack clicked in unison, ensuring a winning momentum heading into the Super Eights from Group C.

Set a target of 166, Italy were bowled out for 123 in 18 overs with Matthew Forde (3/19), Shamar Joseph (4/30) and Gudakesh Motie (2/24) doing the bulk of the damage with the ball for West Indies.

Skipper Hope slammed a 46-ball 75 to guide West Indies to 165/6 after Italy opted to field. Hope's fluent knock with six fours and four sixes held the innings together, but experienced spinners Ben Manenti (2/37) and Crishan Kalugamage (2/25) choked the run flow in the back end to keep the total in check. On a batting-friendly Eden surface with a lightning outfield, where England's 202 was nearly chased down by Italy in the previous game, the target looked underwhelming at the innings break.

But West Indies' bowlers got the job done without much hassle.

"Four and four is a result, you want in the next stage again. So let's just take it one day at a time," said Hope on his team's unbeaten run in the tournament so far.

Young pace-bowling all-rounder Forde, who had conceded just 10 runs and taken a wicket against Nepal in Mumbai, set the tone in the powerplay with another tidy spell. He was exceptional with the new ball, returning figures of 2/17 in three overs.

Forde struck in his first over as Justin Mosca was bowled for 2, done in by an inducker. He then removed Syed Naqvi with a hard-length delivery that shaped away as the batter tried to smash and was caught at mid-off. Shamar Joseph was the pick of the bowlers, using the short-ball strategy smartly. He ended Italy's resistance by taking the key wicket of Grant Stewart in the 15th over, effectively sealing the contest.

Brief scores: West Indies: 165/6 in 20 overs (Shai Hope 75; Crishan Kalugamage 2-25, Ben Manenti 2-37) bt Italy: 123 all out in 18 overs (Ben Manenti 26; Matthew Forde 3-19, Gudakesh Motie 2-24, Shamar Joseph 4-30). **Result:** WI won by 42 runs.
PoM: Shai Hope.

Clarity of roles driven WI's clinical run into Super 8s: Hope

KOLKATA, PTI: Defined roles, calm execution and collective belief have powered West Indies into the Super Eights with four wins and skipper Shai Hope **(in pic)** says "clarity" within the group has played a big part in their success thus far in the T20 World Cup.

Unlike the all-out attacking approach often associated with them, West Indies have built their innings patiently in this tournament, keeping wickets in hand before exploding in the final overs.

"Clarity is the biggest thing, especially in a tournament as big as this," Hope said after their 42-run win over Italy in their final Group C fixture at Eden Gardens.

The two-time champions, who won their last T20 World Cup here at Eden Gardens a decade back before hitting a slump, will now move to Super Eights with fixtures against Zimbabwe, South Africa and India.

"When you come into a World Cup, you don't want to be playing catch-up, especially when you've got to basically hit the ground running, especially when you're playing against some of the better teams in the world."

He said the change is less about tactics and more about defined roles.

"I wouldn't say it's changed much. It's more so about the role that I'm given and how we want to play cricket as a West Indian team," he said.

"But I just feel now it's more so a bit more clarity in terms of the role and the way we want to go about playing our cricket."

"If you want to play a particular role or a particular way, then everything has to shift. So I've just tailored my training sessions and planning towards that."

Voll guides Aussies to series-levelling victory vs India

CANBERRA, PTI: A record opening stand between Georgia Voll and Beth Mooney paved the way for Australia to level the three-match T20I series with a 19-run victory against India in the second match here on Thursday.

Voll and Mooney added 128 runs for the first wicket to register Australia's highest opening stand against India in T20Is, with the hosts posting 163/5.

India, despite making a sparkling start to the chase, crumbled in the end to finish at 144 for nine. Ashleigh Gardner claimed 3/22, while Kim Garth, Annabel Sutherland and Australia captain Sophie Molineux took two wickets each.

The series-deciding third T20I will be played at the Adelaide Oval on Saturday.

India were 65/1 in the ninth over when their slide began as the visitors lost six wickets for seven runs towards the end. India were off the blocks quickly as Shafali Verma's early fireworks was followed by Smriti Mandhana opening up. The two Indian openers put on 54 in the powerplay to put the team on track of the chase.

Brief scores: Australia: 163/5 in 20 overs (Georgia Voll 88, Beth Mooney 46; Arundhati Reddy 2-30) bt India: 144/9 in 20 overs (Shafali Verma 29, Smriti Mandhana 31, Harmanpreet Kaur 36; Ashleigh Gardner 3-22, Kim Garth 2-16, Annabel Sutherland 2-18, Sophie Molineux 2-37). **Result:** Australia won by 19 runs. **PoM:** Georgia Voll. **Series:** Australia level 3-match series 1-1. **Next match:** Feb 21 (Adelaide).

Georgia Voll. X

K'taka complete formalities

Ranji Trophy: Former champs set up final against Jammu & Kashmir

LUCKNOW, PTI

Karnataka entered the Ranji Trophy final after a hiatus of 11 years, advancing by virtue of a first innings lead from their drawn semifinal match against Uttarakhand here on Thursday.

Karnataka will face Jammu and Kashmir in the title clash in Hubballi from February 24.

Resuming the fifth and final day from their overnight 299 for six, Karnataka lost the remaining four wickets quickly to get bowled out for 323 for an overall lead of 826 runs. Uttarakhand fought through fifties by Avneesh Sudha (66), Sachin Rawat (53 not out) and Abhay Negi (57 not), thwarting Karnataka's ambitions for an outright win.

They finished their second innings at 260 for six.

However, the massive first innings lead was enough for them to ensure a passage to the final.

Karnataka were pressing for an outright win after reducing Uttarakhand to 156 for six mid-way through the second session.

Karnataka's Shreyas Gopal picked up his 300th first-class wicket during their Ranji Trophy semifinal against Uttarakhand. PTI

Brief scores: Karnataka: 736 and (O/n: 299/6): 323 all out in 74.3 overs (Kruthik Krishna 52, Smaran R 127, KL Rahul 86 n.o.; Abhay Negi 2-63, Mayank Mishra 4-69) drew with Uttarakhand 233 & 260/6 in 62 overs (Avneesh Sudha 66, Saurabh Rawat 53 n.o., Abhay Negi 57 n.o.; Prasidh Krishna 2-17, Shreyas Gopal 3-83). **Result:** Match drawn (Karnataka qualify by virtue of 1st innings lead). **PoM:** Devdutt Padikkal. **Next Match:** Karnataka vs Jammu & Kashmir (Feb 24, Hubballi).

Shreyas joins 300-wkt club

Karnataka all-rounder Shreyas Gopal joined the elite club of 300 first-class wickets when the leg-spinner dismissed the third wicket in Uttarakhand's second innings on the fifth and final day of their Ranji Trophy semifinal in Lucknow on Thursday, reports DHNS.

Starting the semifinal at 295 first-class wickets, the 32-year-old took 2/41 in the first innings and 3/83 in the second to bring the milestone in his 97th first-class match.

Though the right-hander picked up a pair in the match, he has amassed 4019 runs at an average of 34.64 with six hundreds and 20 fifties.

KSCA confirms Hubballi as Ranji Trophy final venue

BENGALURU, DHNS: It's official now. The upcoming Ranji Trophy final between eight-time champions Karnataka and first-time finalists Jammu and Kashmir will be played in Hubballi from February 24.

With the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru and the KSCA Rajnagar Stadium in Hubballi as two options, the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA), in co-ordination with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), confirmed the venue on Thursday evening following "careful evaluation and detailed consultations."

The decision to opt for Hubballi was primarily influenced by the current upgradation work at the Chinnaswamy Stadium.

"At present, extensive infrastructure and safety enhancement works are underway at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru in line with the recommendations of the Expert Committee and other statutory authorities," the KSCA said in a statement on Thursday.

Explaining further on why Hubballi received the nod over M Chinnaswamy stadium, "Several spectator gates and access points are currently being dismantled and widened, along with other critical improvement works.

In view of these ongoing developments, it would not have been feasible to ensure the high-quality match-viewing experience and spectator convenience," he added.

TENNIS WOMEN'S OPEN W100

Vaishnavi through; Sahaja, Shrivalli exit

Pridankina eases past Jasmijn; Tararudee wins

BENGALURU, DHNS

Vaishnavi Adkar, Shrivalli Rashmikaa Bhamidipaty and Sahaja Yamalapalli were the final three Indians keeping home hopes alive at the KPB Trust ITF Women's Open W100 here on Thursday.

At the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium, the trio's contests ended with contrasting results against their higher-ranked international opponents. While Sahaja lost steam and withered away rather easily, Shrivalli fell behind, fought back before coming up short again. In between these two encounters of opposite nature, it was Vaishnavi who kept the flame alive with a deserving win.

The wildcard entrant took a beating and survived anxious moments, but undeterred, she tossed every ounce of her energy to come out unscathed.

Ranked 690 in the world, Vaishnavi lost her serve twice in the opening set to help a disciplined Mai Hontama of Japan (world No. 220) win it 6-2. The script of the second set was predicted to be much the same, but the 21-year-old Vaishnavi broke Mai in the second game to set the tone for a remarkable comeback. The Indian levelled the proceedings to claim the second 6-4. Locked in rallies that swung back and forth, Vaishnavi and Mai stepped into a tie-breaker to decide who the better of the two is on the day. A couple of clutch forehands by the local girl and a few unforced errors by the Japanese saw Vaishnavi win the set 7-6 (8) and clinch the tense two-hour and 49-minute battle to advance to the quarterfinal.

India's wildcard entrant Vaishnavi Adkar returns during her thrilling pre-quarterfinal win over Japan's Mai Hontama in the Women's Open W100 at the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium in Bengaluru on Thursday. DH PHOTO/ BK JANARDHAN

"Every point matters in a tie-break. No matter what the score is, you can always come back. I was 2-5 down and I came back. I took it one point at a time, stayed in the present and it worked for me," said Vaishnavi, who is playing in her first W100 event.

Earlier, in the first match of the day, the wide gap in the ranking and game between the top-seeded Talia Gibson (ranked 111) of Australia and India No. 1 Sahaja (WR 416) was more than prominent. Needing a mere 58 minutes, Talia double bageled her clueless opponent 6-0, 6-0 to send a warning to the rest of the field.

For the 543rd-ranked Shrivalli, Belgium's 124th-ranked Hanne Vandewinkel was a barrier she almost broke through. The 24-year-old Hyderabadi got overpowered 2-6 before she survived the European's challenge to win the second 7-6 (7). With dwindling reserves in the tank and Hanne making little to no mistakes, Shrivalli succumbed 1-6 in a contest that ended in two hours 29 minutes.

Three Indians took to court on day three of main draw action, but it will be only Vaishnavi to be the only one carrying the hosts' flag among the eight women from across the world who remain.

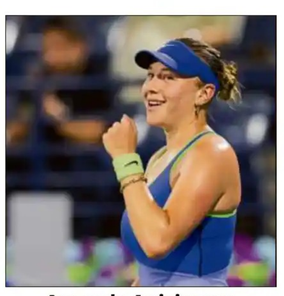
Results: Round of 16 (prefix denotes seeding): 1-Talia Gibson (Aus) bt Sahaja Yamalapalli (Ind) 6-0, 6-0; Vaishnavi Adkar (Ind) bt 8-Mai Hontama (Jpn) 2-6, 6-4, 7-6 (8); 3-Hanne Vandewinkel (Bel) bt Shrivalli Rashmikaa Bhamidipaty (Ind) 6-2, 6-7 (7), 6-1; 5-Polina Latcenko bt Arina Gabriela Vasilescu (Rou) 6-7 (6), 6-3, 6-2; Fangran Tian (Chn) bt Erika Andreeva 6-3, 6-4; 4-Taylah Preston bt Kristiana Sidorova 6-3, 6-3; 7-Elena Pridankina bt Jasmijn Gimbrere (Net) 6-0, 6-1; 2-Lanlana Tararudee (Tha) bt Mei Yamaguchi 6-4, 6-4.

Anisimova ends Andreeva's title defence

DUBAI, AFP

Amanda Anisimova ended a tearful Mirra Andreeva's Dubai title defence on Thursday with a comeback 2-6, 7-5, 7-6 (7/4) victory in the quarterfinals.

The second-seeded American trailed the fifth seed Russian Andreeva by a set and a break before rallying back to complete a two-hour 38-minute win. She thereby booked a place in the semi-finals of a WTA 1000 event for the fourth time in her career.



Amanda Anisimova

"I was almost in tears there at the end," Anisimova said.

"It made me emotional seeing her like that. I feel we both won today," she added.

Anisimova now gets a rematch with fellow American Jessica Pegula. Two breaks gave Andreeva a one-set lead and the defending champion leapt to a 2-0 advantage in the second set before Anisimova retaliated and clinched the next five games.

Anisimova got broken serving for the second set and it was Andreeva's turn to fight back as she took three games in a row to level for five-all.

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